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New York

President: Mr. Han Seung-soo ..... (Republic of Korea)

The meeting was called to order at 9.05 a.m.

Address by Mr. Glafcos Clerides, President of the Republic of Cyprus

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Cyprus.

Mr. Glafcos Clerides, President of the Republic of Cyprus, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Glafcos Clerides, President of the Republic of Cyprus, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Clerides: I would like to extend my warmest congratulations to you, Mr. President, on your well-deserved election as President of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. I also extend my appreciation to your predecessor, Mr. Harri Holkeri, for his effective leadership during his presidency.

The heinous terrorists attacks of 11 September have undeniably transformed international relations. The United Nations is called upon to reinforce its primary role as the standard bearer of the principles that will shape the new environment and unite humanity in the pursuit of justice, tolerance, the dignity of human beings, respect for human rights, the promotion of peace and zero-tolerance for the dark forces of terrorism.

On behalf of the Government and people of Cyprus, I reiterate our deep condolences and sympathy to the American people for the tragic loss of innocent lives caused by the abhorrent terrorist acts of 11 September. We unreservedly condemn these barbaric acts, which we consider to be attacks against the values and principles of humanity.

The community of nations must individually and collectively take concerted and resolute action against terrorism. We believe that there is no justification or excuse for terrorism and, at the same time, we reject any notion of linking this scourge with any particular religious faith or ethnic group. We renew our commitment to implement fully Security Council resolutions on terrorism, in particular resolution 1373 (2001). Cyprus is actively participating in the common effort. It has ratified or acceded to nine of the 12 international conventions pertaining to international terrorism. Furthermore, we expect an early ratification of the most recent Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism, which is already before the House of Representatives.

The Council of Ministers of the Republic of Cyprus approved on 20 September a comprehensive proposal for the establishment of a task force to combat international terrorism.

The United Nations continues to be faced with old and new tasks: globalization, good governance, protection of the environment and the need for sustainable development. The elimination of poverty and pandemics, securing a world free from the threat of

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weapons of mass destruction and maintaining international peace and security remain high on the agenda. That is why we consider it imperative and the duty of each and every Member to provide the necessary resources and support to our Organization.

Cyprus strongly supports the implementation of the commitments we undertook last year in the Millennium Declaration. We also advocate the strengthening and rationalization of the United Nations system, and we welcome the commitment of the Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, to strive for a better and more just world. We congratulate him on the award of this year's Nobel Peace Prize, which is well-deserved recognition of the central role of the United Nations and a tribute to its achievements, as well as to his personal devotion and commitment.

At the beginning of this new millennium, we have a special obligation to place new emphasis on the promotion and the protection of human rights and the defeat of terrorism.

However, the adoption of declarations and legal instruments in the area of human rights is not enough. We need to make accountable those violators of human rights and decisively strike at the culture of impunity. This is why Cyprus strongly supports the early entry into force of the International Criminal Court.

We are also deeply concerned with the increasing number and scope of humanitarian emergencies leading to an ever-rising number of refugees and internally displaced persons. The plight of these unfortunate people merits special attention and coordinated action.

The tragic events of 11 September have highlighted the need to continue and accelerate efforts to prevent and resolve regional conflicts. The inability of the international community to put an end to the unacceptable situation in the Middle East undermines the credibility of the system of collective security. Cyprus, as a neighbouring country with close relations to the peoples of the region, is particularly pained by the continuing cycle of violence, the tragic loss of innocent human lives and the plight of the Palestinian population.

We look forward to a region living in peace, stability and security for all States, including the State of Israel. We reiterate our support for the fulfilment of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the creation of their own State. We urge both parties to work immediately towards finding ways to put an end to this cycle of violence and to respect the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention. We consider the implementation of the recommendations of the Mitchell report as an absolutely necessary first step in this direction. Cyprus reiterates its long-held position for the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

We follow the situation in the Balkans with particular interest. Cyprus supports the implementation of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) on Kosovo. We hope that the forces of peace and reconciliation will prevail and welcome the recent positive developments in the country. We support respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right of return of refugees and the return of property of displaced persons, and the principle of the inviolability of borders and territorial integrity.

Resolution of the Cyprus problem is long overdue. I cannot conceal my deep disappointment, shared by the Security Council in its statement to the Press of 26 September, at the refusal of the Turkish side to continue with the proximity talks to help the Secretary-General's efforts to find a comprehensive settlement. The refusal of Turkish Cypriot leader Mr. Denktash, with the support of Ankara, to resume the talks that he abandoned a year ago, despite the official invitation extended by the Secretary-General in September, is particularly disturbing.

The Secretary-General is now trying to invigorate the process of negotiation. Therefore, in order to facilitate the Secretary-General's effort, I will refrain from making remarks that normally I would have made, other than to identify the reason for the failure to make progress, which is the lack of political will on the part of Turkey and the Turkish Cypriot leader, Mr. Denktash.

The Turkish side has abandoned the concept of a *bi-zonal, bi-communal federal Cyprus, which* Security Council resolutions have provided as the basis for the solution. The Turkish side is also calling the international community to accept the so-called realities, which is the legalization of Turkey's occupation of 37 per cent of Cypriot territory, in breach of international law, the forceful expulsion of Greek Cypriot refugees from the occupied area and the subsequent importation of 120,000 settlers from mainland Turkey in an effort to change the

demographic character of Cyprus. As is well known, the international community, through a plethora of United Nations resolutions, has repeatedly rejected this policy. Acceptance of these so-called realities would create a very dangerous precedent in international affairs, striking at the very heart of the cherished principles of State sovereignty and territorial integrity.

I would like to refer to the purely humanitarian problem of missing persons, the resolution of which remains one of the most pressing issues for the Government of the Republic of Cyprus and for all Cypriots.

Unfortunately, Mr. President, I must once again report to you that the agreement on missing persons of 31 July 1997 between Mr. Rauf Denktash and myself, providing for the exchange of information and for information on the location of graves of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot missing persons, has not been implemented because of the continuing negative attitude of the Turkish side. We appeal again to the Government of Turkey to show the necessary political will in order to bring a final solution to this tragic humanitarian issue and abide by the 10 May 2001 judgement of the European Court of Human Rights.

In the face of current difficulties, we do not despair. Our vision for Cyprus is a departure from the passions of the past. History is often described as the best teacher of wise men. We see as the future of our country: a reunited federal State, member of the European Union, with human and other rights of each and every citizen fully protected under the process of democracy and the rule of law. We see a State with a single citizenship, sovereignty and international personality, a demilitarized State enjoying the fruits of its labours in the wider European family, while at the same time playing its rightful role in our immediate region of the Eastern Mediterranean.

I recommend to the leadership of Turkey that it abandon its threats to annex the occupied part of Cyprus. I urge them to consider the obvious advantages of the solution of the Cyprus problem for stability in our region, the consolidation of the Greco-Turkish rapprochement and the promotion of Turkey's aspirations to join the process of European integration.

I urge the Turkish Cypriot leader, Mr. Denktash, to join me in sharing the vision of a Cyprus too small to be divided but huge for the common prosperity of all its inhabitants. I urge him to look to the future and not to the past, to listen to the increasingly desperate voices of our Turkish Cypriot compatriots and stop placing obstacles, at each turn, to the good offices of the Secretary-General for a solution to the Cyprus problem.

It is noteworthy that the economic prospects for a post-settlement Cyprus are truly impressive. This growth will be even greater for our Turkish Cypriot compatriots, who are currently suffering because of the dire political and economic situation in the occupied area. Tragically, almost 50 per cent have been forced to take the cruel road of emigration. The Turkish Cypriots will benefit considerably from the accession of our country to the European Union.

I urge Mr. Denktash to realize that he and I are not getting any younger and that we owe it to the younger generations of Cypriots to do away with the walls of division. For my part, I reiterate my readiness to engage in the process of negotiations with the necessary political will and good faith for finding a fair and viable solution based on the United Nations resolutions, meeting the legitimate interests of all Cypriots.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Cyprus for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Glafcos Clerides, President of the Republic of Cyprus, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Stjepan Mesić, President of the Republic of Croatia

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Croatia.

Mr. Stjepan Mesić, President of the Republic of Croatia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Stjepan Mesić, President of the Republic of Croatia, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Mesić *(spoke in Croatian; English text provided by the delegation)*: I wanted to come here, and I had to come here. I thought it was necessary to show that I will not allow those fanatic killers, who

may be secretly lurking right now, to prevent me from presenting the general views of my country, the Republic of Croatia, about the current situation in the world in front of this audience in the United Nations.

This year, the general debate is taking place later than usual. The terrorist attacks on New York and Washington postponed the scheduled autumn session. I emphasize the word "postponed". The terrorists did not manage to paralyse the United States of America. They did not manage to stop the work of the United Nations; nor will the world's statesmen cancel their visits to New York and their participation in the work of the General Assembly.

Since 11 September, when as if in a nightmare we were faced with the horror of global terrorism, it has been repeatedly said by many people, including myself, that the world is no longer the same. I am here today to repeat this, and also to add a few more words. It is true, or at least it seems to be true, that the terrorist attacks, which left thousands of deaths behind, have changed everything. However, the truth is slightly different: much has changed as a result of the attacks, but nothing has changed in the area that made it possible for the attacks to be committed.

I would therefore like to stress the following points. In order to make sure that the terror experienced by New York and Washington will not happen again, we — I repeat, we — have to change the world completely.

Today we live with the threat of global terrorism, and the global response to it. With regard to the nature of this first big war of the twenty-first century, I can only repeat what I recently mentioned in my speech in the Israeli parliament, the Knesset. This is not a clash of civilizations; this is not a clash of cultures; this is not a conflict of religions. This is just a confrontation of civilization and non-civilization.

I would also like to be very clear about something else. There is no such thing as "our" or "their" terrorism. There is no justified or unjustified terrorism. It is in the nature of terrorism, regardless of whether it is masked by an ideology, religion or war of liberation, to kill innocent people — the more, the better. Terrorism is therefore absolutely unacceptable, and this is why we are fighting against it today.

We have created a broad anti-terrorist coalition, an alliance of countries not previously known in history, which can only be compared to the anti-fascist coalition at the time of the Second World War. This anti-terrorist coalition is almost an alliance of the civilized world, a defence response of that world to the challenge and threat of destruction and anarchy. I would like to stress two things with respect to the response and the circumstances in which it is taking place.

First, today we are not faced with the dilemma of choosing between anarchy imposed upon us by the terrorists, on the one hand, and autocracy, which some could perhaps see as the only efficient response to global terrorism on the other. To accept that dilemma would be fatal for our civilization. The response is, and can only be, democracy and the rule of law. The defence of democracy must not turn it into its very opposite, even under the conditions of war imposed upon us by the terrorists.

Secondly, the establishment of the anti-terrorist coalition represents the beginning of profound and far-reaching changes on the world political scene. I am speaking about changes in relations between countries or groups of countries. I am also speaking about changes in the nature and way of functioning of international alliances, such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, as well as existing international organizations like the United Nations and those organizations that are just emerging, of which the International Criminal Court is one example.

However, while we are still combating global terrorism using our military, political and economic force and intelligence organizations, we must start looking for answers to the following questions: What is global terrorism and what makes it possible? It is not enough to defeat the terrorists we are faced with today. We have to do everything we can to make sure that we shall not be dealing with new terrorists tomorrow. This is the second level of change that needs to be carried out, but that is not yet being made. I view the situation as follows.

It will not be difficult to encourage fanatic behaviour in both individuals and large groups of people — thus turning them into ruthless killers or terrorists — as long as famine, poverty and non-development are present in large parts of the world, and as long as people anywhere suffer from inequality and the absence of freedom as a result of unresolved regional crises. I therefore think that we have to change

the world completely, if we do not want our present fight against global terrorism and our victory over it, of which I have no doubt, to be mere episodes.

That might sound too ambitious or even a bit utopian, but I believe it is neither of the two. I am sure that, in addition to the fight against terrorism, there is another task ahead of us that is no less difficult or responsible, namely, creating and implementing a global strategy for solving accumulated problems of today's world, problems that did not appear only yesterday. Many of them have been discussed under the dome of the General Assembly. Many beautiful words have been said. It is now time to turn those words into actions. It is now time for those actions to stop ugly, abominable words full of hatred and hostility from turning into new acts of madness such as the ones we saw in this city. We have a common interest: life in peace and safety for all. Let us have a common goal, too: a life of dignity for all. Neither can be achieved tomorrow everywhere, but both can be achieved everywhere.

I would like this session of the United Nations General Assembly to reaffirm this world Organization as an irreplaceable instrument in the struggle for a different and better world. I would like this session to show the political will of all Member States to start seeking together — and finding — in a sincere and coordinated way, solutions to problems that, in the context of the threat of global terrorism, prove to be literally unavoidable.

Let us not forget that in September the terrorists used planes full of passengers in order to kill thousands of people. The next time they may use chemical, biological or, perhaps, even nuclear weapons to kill hundreds of thousands of people. Let us also not forget that this Organization was founded to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war". There is no time to lose. Let us change the world we live in so as to be able to continue to live.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Croatia for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Stjepan Mesić, President of the Republic of Croatia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Luis Ángel González Macchi, President of the Republic of Paraguay

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Paraguay.

Mr. Luis Ángel González Macchi, President of the Republic of Paraguay, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Luis Ángel González Macchi, President of the Republic of Paraguay, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President González Macchi (*spoke in Spanish*): As I begin my statement in the general debate, allow me to express to you, Mr. Han Seung-soo, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea, the pleasure of my delegation at seeing you preside over the work of this session of the General Assembly. Your personal and professional qualities, with which we are familiar, will ensure the success of our work. Your election is also recognition of the sisterly Republic of Korea, a country with which we have close links of cooperation and friendship. You can be sure of the steadfast and determined support of the delegation of Paraguay as you carry out your duties.

Likewise, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the work being done by the Secretary-General of our Organization, Mr. Kofi Annan, who was recently honoured with the Nobel Peace Prize for his dedication to the cause of the United Nations, which is peace itself. We are certain that under his leadership, the efforts of the United Nations will reach all peoples and the Organization will adapt itself to the new reality and important challenges imposed on us by the context of international politics.

Allow me today, two months after the tragic and condemnable events of 11 September, to reiterate the solidarity of my Government and of the people of the Republic of Paraguay with the Government and people of the United States and state our unswerving commitment to the fight against terrorism in all its manifestations. The Republic of Paraguay is not neutral in the face of such a cowardly crime, and it will continue to support all the efforts of this Organization and the international community to put a definitive end to these crimes against humanity. We must not confine ourselves exclusively to demonstrations of solidarity

and condemnation. We must make definite commitments to the international consensus that has been built in order to face this grave threat to humanity.

This general debate is taking place in circumstances that would have been unimaginable to us and that have reminded us of our vulnerability to individuals and groups of individuals that commit indiscriminate violent acts that are totally unjustified in the minds or feelings of civilized human beings. We must also recall that the theme of international terrorism has been on our Organization's agenda since the twenty-seventh session of the General Assembly, and since then to date we have not been sufficiently diligent in taking the legal and collective security measures necessary to prevent events such as those we are belatedly regretting

The urgent fight against terrorism in all its manifestations, which should not be interpreted as a clash of civilizations or of religious beliefs, is the top priority on our international agenda, and we cannot assert that any country is free of the danger posed by international terrorism. Rarely in history have there been such grave challenges to international peace and security like the one we face today — a fact which forces us take clear and firm positions that are in keeping with the provisions of the Charter and the prevailing norms of international law. Not only is international security at stake today, but so is the democratic system itself, which represents victory and universal good in its constant aspiration to and struggle for freedom and justice.

Immediately after these events, my Government strengthened internal measures required by the circumstances so as to be able to exercise greater control and security over movements into and out of the country, while respecting the principle of the free movement of persons.

Mindful of its responsibility and consistent with the commitment made as a Member of this Organization, the Republic of Paraguay, by a decree of the executive branch of 24 October 2001, established an inter-ministerial commission to implement resolution 1373 (2001), recently adopted by the Security Council. The Republic's judicial and legislative branches and the Attorney General's office were called on to designate various governmental division representatives. The commission was installed on 6 November 2001, under the coordination of the Ministry for Foreign Relations.

A draft law is also currently under consideration by the judicial branch, which defines and sets penalties for the crime of terrorism, and it enjoys the full support of the executive branch.

On 12 October 2001, Paraguay signed the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism, which is being referred to the National Congress for adoption. The national Government has embarked on constitutional procedures so that the other conventions on this matter to which it is still not a party will be signed and ratified or adhered to as soon as possible.

We also expect the early adoption by the General Assembly of the two conventions on terrorism, which are under discussion in the Ad Hoc Committee created for this purpose in the Sixth Committee. We must not wait for a replay of the events of 11 September in order to accelerate our strengthening of the international legal framework. The time we delay in strengthening our legal framework will be an opportunity for the terrorists to increase their capacity and expand their criminal activities to other countries.

Within the framework of the Organization of American States (OAS), we have participated with full conviction in deciding on actions and formulating decisions that were recently adopted during the consultative meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs.

In the context of our regional association — the Common Market Southern Cone (MERCOSUR) — on 28 September 2001, it was decided to undertake the broadest possible cooperation among its members in order to carry out information exchange, studies, concerted actions against terrorist acts and the establishment of an open-ended working group to appraise and devise common policies in the fight against terrorism.

In recent weeks we have experienced once again a new terrorist threat, and I am referring particularly to the use of biological agents, whose effects could reach a planetary level and threaten humanity itself as a whole. This new criminal practice compels us to react as rapidly and energetically as possible and be determined in all our efforts to uncover the perpetrators and their sponsors, who are acting in anonymity.

International concern and actions generated by the events of September must also prompt us to reflect and evaluate other themes of transcendental importance on our agenda, such as the fight against poverty, the need to strengthen international economic cooperation for development, access to markets and information and communication technologies by the developing countries so that the imbalances that still characterize international relations may become less severe.

Achieving the goals set in the Millennium Declaration, along with other commitments entered into in the context of development in the various forums of our Organization, must continue to be one of our greatest and urgent challenges in coming years.

For this reason, we fully concur with the point made by the Secretary-General in his report on the work of the Organization that the most difficult battle facing the international community is the eradication of poverty — which is exactly why we must speed up the economic growth of the developing countries. We trust that the International Conference on Financing for Development, to be held next year in Monterrey, Mexico, will achieve the desired results. To this end, we believe that consideration must be given to the clear-cut differences among existing levels of development, to the unevenness that prevails in the capacity of countries to participate in international processes and, in this regard, to the special situation of landlocked countries, which, because of the nature of their territory, face greater difficulties in engaging in external trade, thus putting a brake on their economic development.

It is our hope that the final outcome of that Conference will not be confined solely and exclusively to a mere political declaration or expression of wishes. We hope that it will set clear objectives and goals to ensure that the globalization process, rather than widening the existing gap between rich and poor, will promote the development of all nations within an inclusive and equitable framework.

Given the new challenges and changes that have arisen since the beginning of the new millennium, we reaffirm our commitment to the urgent need to strengthen our Organization, underscoring first and foremost the central role that should be played by the General Assembly as the most representative, universal and equitable deliberative organ. We should not allow the General Assembly to become a mere meeting place where we participate in order to fulfil a routine function within a pre-established timetable of work.

Speeding up reform of the Security Council is another of the key aspects in strengthening the United Nations. The Council should become a more democratic, representative and transparent organ so that it can strike a better political balance. This process should provide for an increase in both permanent and non-permanent members, so as to secure a better level of participation for developing countries which, at the present time, are under-represented. Likewise we believe that, in the area of transparency of the Council's activities, it is appropriate to establish interactive machinery involving the other Member States of the Organization so that they will have greater access to the Council's work. For this reason, we have welcomed the briefing meetings that the Chairman of the Special Committee established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) is giving to other Members of the Organization.

Another outstanding issue that needs to be resolved by our Organization, and one that gives us utmost concern in view of the recent increase in violence and loss of life, is the situation in the Middle East. We believe that both the General Assembly and the Security Council should redouble their efforts to arrive at a solution that will respond to the rightful aspirations of the parties concerned. It should include recognition of Israel's existence within secure and well-defined borders and the Palestinian people's full enjoyment of the right to have its own homeland. We need to tackle this issue firmly and resolutely, ensuring that we work together with the necessary political will to contribute to international peace and security.

My country, Paraguay, also hopes that other areas of tension in the world may be settled. In this regard, mindful of the principle of universality enshrined in our Charter, we advocate a solution to the question of the Republic of China and Taiwan within the framework of the norms of international law.

The current economic and social state of affairs, and its consequences, obliges us to mobilize efficiently, with the greatest possible degree of responsibility and solidarity, the cooperation required from the developed countries and the international financial institutions to tackle the challenges that we, as leaders, face when we try to create conditions of equal opportunity for paid employment, and when we seek to eliminate income

inequities that undermine social stability, and to provide for basic care and services for our peoples and for the sustainable development of our countries.

In conclusion, we are aware today, more than ever, of the need to begin a process that allows us to work together in a rational way to build a more supportive and participatory new economic world order, the ultimate purpose of which would be to promote development and well-being for all of our peoples, once and for all. In this regard, I wish to express my Government's utter conviction that the current international situation underscores the importance of this process beginning and ending within the sphere of the United Nations, thus ensuring full participation in it of all Member States.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Paraguay for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Luis Angel González Macchi, President of the Republic of Paraguay, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Uganda.

Mr. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Museveni: There is a lot of talk floating around regarding some catchwords: the "new international order", "globalization", the "global village" and so forth. All of these ebullient, self-gratifying positions are, apparently, due to the end of the cold war between the Western countries and the former Soviet Union. Of course, the end of the dangerous and misguided rivalry between communism and capitalism is welcome and has, indeed, opened some new opportunities, if fully utilized by all concerned.

However, it must be pointed out unequivocally that many of the problems in the world today predate the cold war; they predate the onset of communism in Russia in 1917. The slave trade started in the 1440s along the West African coast. A shift from bleeding Africa through slavery to resident colonialism was ordained in Berlin in 1884. That was long before communism took over in Russia. Therefore the cold war could not have been responsible for these mistakes and for the complications they created, many of which we are still grappling with today, especially in Africa.

Therefore, the euphoria that followed the end of the cold war was not wholly justified. The song about globalization, as I have pointed out repeatedly, is not a new tune at all. Africans were globalized as slaves all over all over the world in the 1440s. My Christian name is Joel, actually a Jewish name, so I am already globalized. Many of my countrymen have got Arab names like Azizi and Musa because they are Muslims. We were globalized long ago in Africa. Unfortunately, though, that globalization movement was parasitic. It was a parasitic globalization movement; it was not a symbiotic globalization movement. Therefore the only new question we can legitimately and usefully ask is: Will the new phase of globalization be less parasitic and more symbiotic, or not? That is the question. Will the new globalization be to everybody's mutual benefit, or will it be the old story of parasitism on a global scale?

The parasitism in the world is not the sole responsibility of those who benefit from inequality. Even the victims have always contributed to their marginalization by their own wrong aims and methods — before colonization, during colonization and, even, after colonization. Myopic African chiefs were the main facilitators of the slave trade. Until very recently the Europeans did not possess the technological means to subdue the African continent as far as means of transport — that is to say, railways — weapons or medicine were concerned. Without the fratricidal, brother-against-brother wars fomented by African chiefs, neither the slave trade nor colonialism would have been possible. We would have defeated the colonialists and forced them, right from the beginning, to cooperate with us to everybody's mutual benefit. Weakness on the side of the potential victim always tempts the aggressor. The aggressor is always encouraged by the weakness of the potential victim.

Even today, however, the authorship of the inequality among peoples is still a joint responsibility of the victims — who in this case are Africans, Arabs and other marginalized peoples — of the parasitic globalization movement that is now 500 years old, on the one hand, and the beneficiaries of this hitherto unequal and, in the past, evil movement, on the other hand. Both the victims and the beneficiaries of the parasitic globalization movement are responsible for this situation. The beneficiaries of the hitherto parasitic globalization movement have been the North Americans, the Europeans and the Japanese.

For a variety of reasons, some formerly colonized peoples — such as the Indians, Indonesians, Pakistanis, South-East Asians and Native Americans — and formerly semi-colonized peoples, such as the Chinese, have made significant upward movements that are helping, slowly but surely, to even out the balance of power in the world. Some other peoples, however, on account of a number of endogenous and exogenous factors, are still living as the wretched of the Earth. Many Africans and some Arabs fall into this category of the still-unredeemed of the Earth. As I have said, the unredeemed are so categorized partly on account of their own internal mistakes — such as sectarianism, xenophobia, unprincipled conflicts, the strangulation of free enterprise, the political balkanization of their regions, the strangulation of political freedoms and so on — and partly on account of still very unfavourable exogenous factors. The most unfavourable such factor is the lack of access by these countries to markets in North America, the European Union, Japan, China, India and Russia.

The song about aid is meaningless without access to markets. Aid without access to markets is meaningless. All protectionism must end, especially in the countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation in Europe (OECD). Subsidies to the farmers of Europe must end, if we are talking of a global village of symbiosis, and not parasitism. I commend the American Government and President George Bush for the recent African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) initiative. Although Uganda has not yet benefited from AGOA on account of our endogenous weaknesses, which have been accentuated by the blurred views of our partners in the multilateral institutions, other African countries have started benefit, such as Kenya, Madagascar, Lesotho, Nigeria and South Africa. This is good. The African Growth and Opportunity Act enunciated by the American Government is the first good news I have heard in a long time. The Americans are at last beginning to change their image of being parasitic global villagers.

The Europeans must catch up with the Americans in shedding this uncomplimentary label. Although they have talked about "everything but guns" going into Europe from Africa, they are still giving subsidies to artificial farmers in Europe. As a consequence of the $1.2 trillion value of global trade in agricultural products, Africa gets only about $20 billion — if the recent results of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) are included; that is about 2 per cent of the total. So of the total value of agricultural trade, Africa only gets 2 per cent. At the same time, the countries of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) are spending $361 billion on artificial subsidies for farmers of those countries. Yet these are the countries that evangelize in the name of free trade. The preachers of free trade are practising incredibly expensive protectionism. What an unfortunate paradox. These double standards must end.

Africa has removed some of the old impediments, some of the old endogenous factors, to private investment. The sanctity of private property is now almost a universal concept in Africa. Nationalization of private enterprises is no more. Some of the African countries have a consistently stable macroeconomic framework. Inflation in Uganda is now negative 0.3 per cent. The African currencies are now convertible; a large part of Africa is very peaceful; infrastructure is reasonable; and democracy is widely practised in Africa today. We are even addressing the issue of the excessive political Balkanization of the continent, which has 53 States, compared to 3 States in the whole North American continent.

We are handling this in a variety of ways, including through economic blocs like the Southern Africa Development Community in southern Africa, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa in East and Central Africa and the Economic Community of West African States in western Africa. The world needs to encourage these positive trends in Africa by opening up their markets on a quota-free, tariff-free basis. This will, ipso facto, force multinational investors to rush to Africa and invest there. They are already doing so just by the limited AGOA measures by the Americans. With more civilized aims and methods, balanced world

development is possible and desirable for everybody, including OECD citizens who are forced to eat inferior foods and are taxed to protect those poor-quality foods against better foods from Africa.

Whenever I travel abroad, I pack my own Ugandan foods — milk, millet flour, fruits, legumes, chicken, honey and plantain bananas, called *matooke* in our language. The other day, on my way here, my pineapple stocks ran out and my staff bought pineapples from a supermarket in the United Kingdom. I took just one slice and terminated the whole exercise at once. First of all, the pineapple was hard. I had never seen a hard pineapple until I saw that one in London. It was less sweet and had an ammonia-like pungent taste. I had had the same experience in Washington once. They brought something they called a pineapple. I could not believe it. Why must citizens of the world endure these deprivations on account of policies designed to serve narrow interests? Why must this be? I will not eat pineapple again until I go back to Uganda.

The oppressors, the colonialists and those who sought to control the destiny of others used barbaric methods: genocide, forced labour, ethnocide and so on. It is amazing, therefore, that some of those who claim to be fighting for the liberation of oppressed peoples also use barbaric means such as terrorism. In the ongoing debate on terrorism I have not heard anybody bothering to define the difference between a freedom fighter and a terrorist. What is the difference between a freedom fighter and a terrorist? Mzee Nelson Mandela — "Mzee" means someone who is dignified and elderly — was a freedom fighter until recently. Was he a terrorist? Not at all. Did anyone hear that Mr. Mandela had hijacked a plane or planted a bomb in a restaurant? But Mr. Mandela was a freedom fighter. He was not a terrorist. The difference between a terrorist and a freedom fighter lies in the fact that while a freedom fighter sometimes may be forced to use violence, he cannot use indiscriminate violence. The person who uses indiscriminate violence is a terrorist. A freedom fighter may sometimes be forced to use violence.

I was forced to use violence against Idi Amin. But I never hijacked a plane. It was never heard that Museveni hijacked a plane or planted a bomb in a bar. People in bars are not politicians. Some of them just go there to make merry. What kind of revolutionary is someone who kills such people? The person who uses indiscriminate violence is a terrorist. A terrorist does not differentiate between combatants and non-combatants, between civilians and servicemen and between armed servicemen and unarmed servicemen. Even if someone is a soldier, if he is off duty, he should not be attacked, if one claims to be a freedom fighter. He should not be attacked. It is against the laws of war. The terrorist fights a war without declaring one. That is why terrorists hijack planes, plant bombs in populated centres and so forth.

We normally get technical advice from other parts of the world. The Europeans always come to give us technical advice. I would like to give you technical advice about freedom-fighting. We have done very well in that. In Africa, since 1961, we have fought wars of liberation in Mozambique against the Portuguese; in Angola against the Portuguese; in Guinea-Bissau against the Portuguese; in Zimbabwe against minority whites; in South Africa against minority whites; in Namibia against minority whites; and in Uganda against Idi Amin. There was a criminal called Idi Amin whom we had to fight. However, we never used terrorism. This is on the record. We always fought combatant to combatant. Quite a number of times our comrades used mass action: strikes, demonstrations, petitions, diplomatic struggle and so on. Not a single plane was hijacked by African freedom fighters, although there were anti-colonial wars in all these countries.

Terrorist actions are misguided and criminal and must be opposed by all as a matter of principle. Africa was beginning to benefit from AGOA, the measure taken by the Americans to open their markets to our goods. Business has, however, now somewhat slumped in America. Therefore, the terrorists, who claim to be fighting for the Palestinian cause, are objectively hurting the interests of Africans, who have always been the allies of the Palestinians. This is counter-productive. The terrorists have also tried to polarize the world, pitting Moslems against Christians. This is erroneous and unacceptable. Exploitation knows no boundaries and cuts across all races and religions. Exploiters are found in all religions and races. The Arabs had to oppose Turkish imperialism. Yet both the Arabs and the Turks were Muslims. Why, then, did they have to oppose each other? One of the monsters of the last century, Idi Amin, of my country, was a Muslim. We had to get rid of him to liberate everybody, including the Muslims, in Uganda. War has been going

on in the Sudan for decades. Elements that claim to be acting in the name of Islam have been the ones taking the wrong position in this conflict, seeking hegemony over God's people.

I, therefore, support the position of the United States on this occasion, as we did in the Gulf War, in fighting and defeating these reactionaries, who profane the name of freedom fighters. If necessary, all countries of the world opposed to terrorism should contribute troops and finish the job quickly. The coalition against terrorism should be regarded in the same way as the coalition against fascism in the 1930s and 1940s.

Nevertheless, the just aspirations of the Palestinian people and of other oppressed peoples, like the people of southern Sudan, must be supported so that we can get peaceful resolutions to these conflicts. I welcome freedom and equality for all peoples of the world. Those who strive to dominate or exploit others have illegitimate ambitions. We now have a chance to build a new, just world. The free will of all peoples should be ensured. In addition, the most important instrument of emancipation, free trade, should give African goods quota- and tariff-free access to the markets of the countries of the Organization for Cooperation and Development (OECD) and vice versa.

Africa is beginning to tame its conflicts. The conflict in Lesotho was resolved by an African mechanism. Recently, the Arusha Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation ended the conflict in Burundi. It is possible to resolve our age-old problems and finally become part of the new world order rather than mere spectators of the process.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Uganda for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Major-General Joseph Kabila, President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Major-General Joseph Kabila, President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Major-General Joseph Kabila, President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and invite him to address Assembly.

Major-General Kabila (*spoke in French*): Allow me, at the outset, to add my voice to those of the distinguished speakers before me, to offer you, Sir, on behalf of the people of the Congo and myself, our warmest congratulations on your election as President of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. The Republic of Korea, your country, maintains excellent relations with mine.

May I also use this opportunity to offer our most heartfelt congratulations to Mr. Kofi Annan, a distinguished son of Africa, on his re-election to the post of Secretary-General and on the Nobel Prize, which has been awarded to him in recognition of his commitment to the cause of promoting peace in the world.

The people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, its Government and I condemn unreservedly the blind acts of terrorism that plunged the United States and all of humanity into grief on 11 September 2001. These were acts of gratuitous violence, which deserve only the contempt of the whole international community and of all nations that hold peace and justice dear.

By applying and implementing Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), my Government is committed to fully cooperate in advancing all initiatives aimed at eliminating terrorism in all its forms.

The Congolese people, which is itself the innocent victim of a war of aggression by Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi — another kind of terrorism characterized by acts of barbarism that directly or indirectly brought about the death of millions of Congolese — had no trouble grasping the heinous nature the sad events that took place in the United States of America on 11 September 2001.

It would be tiresome to go back over the origin and consequences of the war of aggression that started on 2 August 1998, in flagrant violation of the Charters of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU). Thus, following the logic of peace and well aware that only non-violent settlements bring lasting peace, I can but welcome the many peace

initiatives that have sought to bring about negotiated solutions to the conflicts.

I have particularly in mind President Chiluba of Zambia, the appointed mediator of the Lusaka peace process for the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I would also like to mention the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), and in particular Angola, Namibia and Zimbabwe, which, in accordance with the SADC charter, rallied around my country when it was attacked.

I would also like to address my thanks and gratitude to the United Nations and the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), whose arduous work on the ground has been very praiseworthy, and to the OAU, the European Union and certain other traditional partners of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The situation on the ground has improved in spite of the bad faith displayed by some of the parties to the Lusaka Agreement. The disengagement of forces is in its final stages, and the effective end to hostilities which it has brought has been observed to the satisfaction of all. However, the return of armed tension has been seen in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in the part of the country that is occupied by Rwanda. These hostilities have been wrongly described as fighting that has moved to the rear of the Rwandan forces. In fact, what we see is the logical consequence of the failure of a new plan by the Rwandan aggressors, who hoped to sweep away all Congolese resistance, the better to occupy the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in order to be able to continue to pillage our wealth unchallenged.

As far as the disarmament of the armed groups is concerned, we should note that a disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration (DDRRR) programme, drafted by MONUC and the Joint Military Commission (JMC), was adopted by the Political Committee set up under the Lusaka Agreement. It provides, first of all, for the voluntary disarmament of all the armed groups in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In this respect, the Congolese Government, reaffirming its good faith and its commitment to this plan, has regrouped and confined 3,000 Rwandan combatants in Kamina in Katanga province, and a MONUC mission has been there for several days now in order to identify these particular individuals.

As far as the withdrawal of foreign forces is concerned, the definitive and total departure of all Namibian forces has been noted. This movement of foreign forces back to their countries is continuing; now the Zimbabwean, Angolan and Ugandan military are beginning their withdrawal. Paradoxically, however, and despite the continuing demands by the international community through all of the relevant Security Council resolutions, Rwanda is actually reinforcing its military presence in the Congo.

The process of reconciliation, so long awaited through national dialogue, made significant advances during the preparatory meetings from 20-24 August 2001 in Gaborone, thanks to the Republican pact initiated by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate solemnly from this rostrum the full commitment of my Government to participate fully in the sessions on this dialogue to be held in the Republic of South Africa. I invite the facilitator to do everything possible to deal with pending issues in order to make sure that the forum regains its inclusive character, as provided for by the Lusaka Agreement and the relevant Security Council resolutions.

For the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, it is important that representatives of all sectors of our population should be able to participate in this dialogue so as to lay the foundations of a democratic State. I would invite the international community, at the appropriate time, to assist my country in organizing free, democratic and transparent elections, which would allow the Congolese people to choose their own leaders, leaders who will have the legitimacy that a popular election provides and which, in turn, guarantees political stability.

I would like to avail myself of this opportunity to invite the United Nations to institute exemplary sanctions against all those States, their accessories and accomplices that are pillaging the wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I could not conclude my statement without thanking the Security Council members for having unanimously adopted resolution 1376 (2001) on 9 November, which condemns the establishment of a joint force set up by the Congolese rebels, instigated by Rwanda in violation of the Lusaka Agreement, in

violation of the DDRRR plan and of all relevant Security Council resolutions. This resolution is particularly welcome for its providing for the deployment of MONUC's phase III. It also provides for the demilitarization of the city of Kisangani, the neutrality of Kindu and the reconstruction of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In my statement, I have condemned the infamous acts perpetrated against the people of the United States and of the world as a whole. I have also spoken of the catastrophic situation in my country, which has been victim of a war of aggression for the past three years. I have also noted the significant advances achieved in the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which unfortunately risks being compromised through the bad faith of Rwanda and its Congolese rebel accomplices.

I have stressed how essential the support of the international community is if we are to achieve this process successfully and to launch the reconstruction of my country. The Congolese people, who have suffered so much, are asking only one thing of the United Nations and the international community: that justice be done for the weak and the strong, for rich and poor alike.

Major-General Joseph Kabila, President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Agenda item 9 (*continued*)

General debate

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius.

The Right Honourable Anerood Jugnauth, Prime Minister of Mauritius, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: I have the great pleasure to welcome to the United Nations The Right Honourable Anerood Jugnauth, Prime Minister of Mauritius, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

Mr. Jugnauth (Mauritius): Mr. President, it gives me great pleasure to address this Assembly under your able and distinguished leadership. May I, on behalf of my delegation, take this opportunity to extend to you our warmest congratulations on your election as President of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. You may rest assured, Sir, of the fullest support and co-operation of my delegation in the daunting tasks that you will be called upon to confront during your tenure.

I also avail myself of this opportunity to thank Mr. Harri Holkeri for the excellent manner in which he steered the work of the last session of the General Assembly.

May I also congratulate a distinguished son of Africa, our Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for his unopposed election to a second term. The award of the Nobel Peace Prize to him and to the United Nations confirms the high esteem in which he and our Organization are held.

As we gather in New York, the atrocities of 11 September remain fresh in our collective memory. Allow me to pay a special tribute to the memory of the thousands of innocent victims of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon and in Pennsylvania.

We condemn the attempts of the terrorists to justify their acts as being in conformity with the tenets of Islam. We do so because neither Islam nor any other religion condones the killing of innocent civilians.

In order to preserve the lives of our citizens and their way of life, we are bound to focus on the sequels of those heinous terrorist attacks.

International terrorism must be fought with all the means at our disposal. Terrorists know only one thing, and that is destruction. While Mauritius is fully committed to the global coalition against terrorism, we urge the international community to take a long-term view of international terrorism. Terrorism is the greatest threat to international peace, security and development.

We also believe that the war on terrorism must be fought on the basis of principles and standards which are accepted by every single State. Terrorism remains terrorism, and there can be no justification for it at any time or under any circumstances. We also consider that cross-border terrorism has caused and is continuing to cause immeasurable damage in many parts of the Indian subcontinent and in Africa. We are convinced that there must be no double or multiple standards in the war against terrorism. In this context, we believe that the International Criminal Court must become

operational at the earliest date, and countries which rejected it in the past must review their stand.

We shall work closely with the Security Council and the international community at large in order to fully implement Security Council resolutions 1368 (2001) and 1373 (2001).

Together with the war on terrorism, we need to wage many other wars, particularly in the light of the Millennium Declaration adopted last year. We need to pursue wars against poverty, ignorance, hunger and underdevelopment. The war against the scourge of HIV/AIDS is a war that we cannot afford to lose. It is our belief that the international community must remain focused on these issues, as they are very often the breeding ground for dissent, crises, wars and terrorism.

Peace and security will be in danger as long as nuclear arsenals and weapons of mass destruction continue to exist and proliferate. Now that terrorists may get hold of or may already have in their possession such weapons, it becomes extremely urgent for the nuclear States to start meaningful discussions on the elimination of these weapons within a specified time frame.

With the conclusion of the recent United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, we need to move towards early implementation of the measures contained in its Programme of Action. For Africa, this is a top priority. We are convinced that disarmament cannot remain a slogan; it must be effectively addressed.

Conflicts, wars and crises still persist in many parts of the African continent and elsewhere, particularly in the Balkans. Although we are encouraged by the latest developments in Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo and by the direct talks between Rwanda and Uganda to defuse situations before they become explosive, we consider that peace and security in Africa deserve the closer involvement of the international community, particularly in making available adequate financial resources. We expect early and full deployment of the third phase of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) in keeping with the Security Council resolutions, and we support the inter-Congolese dialogue.

We are grateful to African leaders like former President Nelson Mandela, President Moi and former President Masire for their commitment to ridding Africa of conflicts and to paving the way for an African economic take-off.

Mauritius is committed to a major reform of the composition of the Security Council. We are convinced that we should amend the Charter in a way that would reflect the emergence of new power structures justifying an expansion of the membership. Whatever may be the criteria for an expanded membership, we believe that India ought to become a permanent member at the earliest opportunity. The expansion of the Security Council, as well as a reassessment of the absolutist veto, cannot be delayed any longer.

The birth of the African Union coincides with its role as the engine to drive forward the process of the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD). The New Partnership for African Development is a road map for Africa to eradicate poverty and to achieve the sustainable growth and development of the continent, thereby allowing it to find its place in the world economy. It is a call for a new relationship between Africa and its partners.

We are mindful of the setback which the events of 11 September have caused to the major economies, but we are also hopeful that the G-8 will remain committed to providing to Africa all assistance for the effective implementation of NEPAD.

Mauritius supports the liberalization of international trade under the rules of the World Trade Organization. We are, however, disappointed at the lack of progress with regard to implementation issues and the undertakings of the major trading countries under previous Uruguay Round agreements. The terms of trade as well as non-trade concerns are tilted too much in favour of the developed countries, which are still denying market access. Africa, which today accounts for less than two per cent of global trade, could, with the removal of tariff and non-tariff barriers in the developed countries, significantly increase its share of global trade and thus improve the standard of living of its people. An increase in trade for Africa will also mean a lesser dependence on aid.

While globalization throws up opportunities as well as challenges, we also have to be conscious of its negative aspects. We appeal for there to be no double dealing in trade with poor countries.

The Small Island Developing States experience a variety of inherent disadvantages. In their efforts to achieve sustainable development and the need to enhance their capabilities to function effectively within the new globalized trading arrangements, my delegation calls for the urgent and effective implementation of the Programme of Action for Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

We welcome the statement by the United States that it supports the creation of a Palestinian State. We consider this to be a major step in the right direction for the resolution of the Middle East crisis. We urge the United States to be even-handed in its relations with both Israel and the Palestinian Authority. We also believe that the unilateral imposition of conditions prior to the resumption of peace talks is unhelpful. With the support of the international community, we are confident that Israel and Palestine can, within the framework of the Mitchell report and the Tenet plan, work out a just and durable peace in which the States of Israel and Palestine can live side by side, secure within their respective boundaries.

In our region, the Southern African Development Community and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) are emerging as important institutions integrating our economies. These initiatives are helping the member States to better confront the challenges of globalization. COMESA is the first regional institution to have set up a free trade area. These regional institutions also address issues of good governance, as well as security and peace. We take an interest in the domestic situation of our fellow members inasmuch as whatever happens in one member State inevitably impacts, negatively or otherwise, on all member States.

We urge all parties to the Framework Agreement for National Reconciliation to take all measures to expedite the process towards the referendum in the Comoros that will usher in a new constitution. Under the aegis of the African Union, Mauritius is proposing to host a donors' meeting as soon as the Framework Agreement is implemented.

We continue to claim our sovereignty over the Chagos archipelago, which was excised by the United Kingdom from the then colony of Mauritius in violation of international law and of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV). We are convinced that the time for the United Kingdom to engage in talks for the early retrocession of the archipelago to Mauritian sovereignty is long overdue, inasmuch as problems left over from colonial days cannot remain unresolved.

We are also concerned by the plight of all those Mauritians, commonly known as the Ilois, who were forcibly and in outright violation of their fundamental rights removed from the islands forming the archipelago by the then colonial Power. We support their legitimate claim for all appropriate remedies.

With regard to Tromelin, I reiterate the position of my delegation, as expressed in the General Assembly last year, and once again call on the French Government to enter into constructive negotiations for the settlement of this issue.

As I speak here, bombs are still falling over Afghanistan. We are aware that the living conditions of the civilian population are difficult. We deplore the loss of civilian lives. We are confident, however, that the international community will rise to the occasion in providing all humanitarian assistance to the needy in Afghanistan. We are hopeful that the efforts under way to install a broad-based Government in Afghanistan will be successful.

The Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Morocco, the World Food Summit in Rome, the discussions on trade issues in Doha and a host of other meetings in recent days demonstrate the close dependence that we have on each other. No country can afford to go it alone and the many problems that we face today must be faced by us all in a spirit of solidarity, cooperation and mutual accommodation. We need to be continually engaged and to collaborate so that never again does humanity live the extremely painful moments that it lived after 11 September.

The United Nations is the forum to address all our concerns and we are sure that all countries, regardless of their might, understand that there can be no substitute for the rule of law, good governance, democracy and respect for the dignity and rights of the individual. We do recognize the threats posed by international terrorism and we are all prepared to do whatever has to be done to combat it. It is our hope that this togetherness will not be frittered away when the threat and the danger have disappeared. The world has walked away on too many occasions in the past. From

now on, we have to walk together and pave the way for a better world.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I thank the Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius for the statement he has just made.

The Right Honourable Anerood Jugnauth, Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mr. Zlatko Lagumdzija, Prime Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Mr. Zlatko Lagumdzija, Prime Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President: I have great pleasure in welcoming Mr. Zlatko Lagumdzija, Prime Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Lagumdzija (Bosnia and Herzegovina): I am grateful for the opportunity to address the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session. I would like to extend my warmest congratulations to you, Sir, on your well-deserved election.

I would like to join those who spoke before me in expressing my deep condolences to the people of the United States. The date of 11 September will be forever inscribed in our minds and hearts as the symbol of the most blatant affront to civilization and commonly accepted values. Regardless of the brutality of the terrorist attacks directed against innocent civilians, however, they failed in the attempt to polarize the world and to undermine the very foundations of our societies. Those attacks were attacks against all of us, too. We therefore fully support the approach outlined yesterday morning by President Bush.

Yes, the fight against all kinds of terrorism must be determined and precise. It has to target terrorists, who must be apprehended and brought to justice. At the same time, we have to do much more when we are talking about quick and massive help to the innocent civilians of Afghanistan.

I would like to use this opportunity to recall that my country promptly and resolutely joined the worldwide coalition against terrorism. And I am convinced that, by adopting such a clear position, my country is a part of the solution, rather than a part of the problem, in this particular field. I spoke about this more extensively in this same Hall two days ago on the occasion of the meeting devoted to the dialogue among civilizations.

Coming from Bosnia and Herzegovina, which was treated by various kinds of fundamentalists and radicals as a problematic and questionable Balkan country because of its multi-ethnic and multicultural nature, I am especially sensitive to the type of terrorism that misuses religious feelings and, in so doing, jeopardizes local societies and global society.

The war against terrorists is justified, but all of us will be losers if we fail to do everything we can to help the innocent people who are suffering today. Our experience in Bosnia and Herzegovina teaches us that military intervention, even when complemented by humanitarian assistance, is not enough for a sustainable, long-lasting solution.

At the same time, we — and when I say "we", I mean the international community speaking with one voice, together with local democratic forces, regardless of their current strength — have to have a clear vision of a political solution, accompanied by a programme for social and economic development, once the military intervention is over. Only such a comprehensive approach — military, humanitarian, political and socio-economic — will leave no room for the terrorists to interpret the intervention in Afghanistan as a war against Islam or as a symbol of the clash of civilizations.

The terrorists will lose. Without a comprehensive approach, we might be losers, too, by the measure of ethical and universal human values. That is why we have to tackle these areas of future action together, starting today.

At a time when humanity has reached for the highest objectives but also carried out the worst deeds, there should be no doubt that the United Nations can fulfil its new tasks, confronting old and new challenges, leading in the building of a prosperous world founded no longer on force but on the rule of law, not on a balance of power but on a balance of cooperation.

The contribution of the international community in achieving progress in my country, Bosnia and

Herzegovina, was particularly visible in the role of the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Stabilization Force, the United Nations High Representative, the Peace Implementation Council, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and other members of the family of the international community present in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

We particularly recognize and value the role of the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina in police reform and the substantial upgrading of the judicial system. The United Nations family of organizations was certainly one of the key players in the development of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a multiethnic, tolerant and democratic State.

Knowing that the mandate of the United Nations Mission in the present form will terminate by the end of 2002, we expect the United Nations mission activities to continue in a different form. However, we would like to see a smooth transition without any interruption in these extremely important activities.

The noble goals and accomplishments of our Organization were honoured recently, and I would like to extend sincere and heartiest congratulations to the Secretary-General and the whole of the United Nations for the recognition by the Nobel Peace Prize Committee.

I would like to inform the Assembly that we have decided to present candidature of Bosnia and Herzegovina for a non-permanent seat in the Security Council for the year 2010. We are convinced that by doing so, we confirm our commitment to contributing fully to the work of the United Nations. It would also be a clear sign of advanced stability and normalization of life in our country, and particularly of our commitment to economic and democratic development. Therefore, we hope that as early as in 10 years from now, Bosnia and Herzegovina will succeed in becoming a member of the most important political body of the United Nations.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, we are working daily to live up to the vision of a safer and more peaceful, stable and self-sustaining country. Our efforts are directed toward three main sets of priorities.

First is the rule of law, through the speedy implementation of the latest Constitutional Court decisions and through proper judiciary and police actions fighting terrorism and organized crime, combating corruption, arresting indicted war criminals and creating a stable environment for the return of refugees.

Second are the further building and strengthening of the State's institutions.

Third are economic reforms directed to the strengthening of economic activities; establishment of a single economic space; and setting up the conditions for upgraded education, thus offering a choice for our young generations to stay in Bosnia and Herzegovina and become an inseparable factor in its development and future.

Of course, implementation of the Dayton/Paris Peace Agreement and the continuous adjustment and upgrading of our legal framework according to European standards are the foundation of activities of the authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina at all levels.

Once again, I would like to express the gratitude of my Government to the international community for its devoted support of the enduring stability and development of my country. We are determined to move from the position of a patient or passive recipient of aid from international organizations and institutions to one of a partner in and contributor to international efforts. We have to go through the process of being first a recipient and then a partner in order to finally become the owner of the changes in our country.

We are aware that responsibility for healing the consequences of the war and post-war stagnation, and for the removal of impediments to faster stabilization and progress, rest primarily with the political leadership in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The future of Bosnia and Herzegovina is in its integration into European and North Atlantic organizations. The establishment of contractual relations with the European Union through the stabilization and association process is one of the priority strategic goals of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Further improvement of good relations with neighbouring countries and increased regional cooperation remain key elements for the stability and development of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the region.

Relations with the Republic of Croatia since the democratic changes in January last year are improving every day, in every sense.

As a result of the democratic changes last year in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Bosnia and

Herzegovina has established full diplomatic relations with that country, which opened the official channels of the two countries to deal with a number of important matters.

However, a number of issues that burdened relations between the neighbouring countries are still on the agenda. Some of them have already been solved in bilateral meetings, but we are looking forward to tackling them more actively.

Today is exactly one year since the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina, for the first time in 10 years of being driven by nationalism, gave less than 50 percent of their votes to three major ethnic parties. It took us almost four months to establish the new, democratic, multi-ethnic, Europe-oriented Government that is now in place. We believe that we are on the way to striking a proper balance between the necessary assistance of the international community and further decision-making by ourselves.

Finally, I can assure you today that our country has a leadership with a clear vision and is ready to act accordingly. For years, Bosnia and Herzegovina was one of the world's international and regional problems. Today, my country is becoming one of the solutions. With this conviction, we are looking at the important challenges and tremendous tasks that are still ahead of us. We must confront them without delay. I am standing here to say we will do it.

Mr. Tang Jiaxuan (China) *(spoke in Chinese)*: Mr. President, first of all, please allow me to warmly congratulate you on your election as President of the fifty-sixth session of the United Nations General Assembly. I am confident that under your able guidance and with the close cooperation of all delegates, this session will be crowned with success. I would also like to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to Mr. Holkeri for what he did as President of the last session of the General Assembly.

A year ago, the United Nations convened the historic Millennium Summit. The United Nations Millennium Declaration issued by the Summit identifies the objectives for promoting world peace and development in the new century.

International developments over the past year demonstrate that more and more countries have opted for increasing dialogue and cooperation, preserving world peace and seeking common development. To be sure, the cause of human progress still involves a long and arduous effort. Factors of uncertainty in the international situation are on the rise. More efforts should be made to democratize international relations, and there has been no marked change in the irrational international economic order.

Terrorism is a widespread scourge that threatens world peace and stability. We strongly condemn the terrorist attacks on the United States on 11 September, and extend our deepest sympathy and condolences to the families of the innocent victims, as well as to the Government and the people of the United States. China has always opposed all forms of terrorism. No matter when, where or in what form terrorism strikes, and no matter whom it is directed against, it should be met with condemnation and responded to with counter-strikes by the international community, which should adopt a unified position on the matter.

China has taken an active part in international cooperation against terrorism. In addition to joining most of the international conventions against terrorism, China has ratified the Shanghai Convention on Combating Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism, concluded by the member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

China is in favour of a primary role for the United Nations and the Security Council in the international effort against terrorism. China supports the relevant resolutions that have been adopted and is in favour of closer cooperation and coordination among the various countries concerned to this end.

China strongly believes that any military action against terrorism should have a clearly defined target and avoid harming innocent people. All such actions should be consistent with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and other universally recognized norms of international law, and should serve the long-term interests of peace in the region and the world at large.

China believes that terrorism is a tiny fringe of extreme evil, representing neither one particular ethnic group nor one particular religion. They must not, therefore, be lumped together. China, too, is threatened by terrorism. The "Eastern Turkestan" terrorist forces are trained, equipped and financed by international terrorist organizations. The fight against the "Eastern Turkestan" group is an important aspect of the international fight against terrorism.

In today's world, the question of security is becoming increasingly multifaceted and globalized. Only enhanced international cooperation can help us effectively cope with global security challenges and bring about universal and lasting security. Countries should endeavour to foster a new security concept, based on mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and collaboration. They should seek security through mutual trust and pursue cooperation to their mutual benefit so as to effectively reduce factors of insecurity.

The issue of arms control has always been closely interrelated with that of security. In the face of the new situation, we should go on working for the preservation of the existing legal regime for international arms control and disarmament and for the maintenance of global strategic stability, without jeopardizing the security of any country.

Tackling regional hot spots is vital to regional and global security. We are following with deep concern the current developments in the Middle East. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict that broke out in September last year is continuing unabated. It poses a grave threat to the Middle East peace process and to regional stability. China supports the relevant United Nations resolutions and the principle of land for peace. It also supports the Palestinian people in their just struggle to regain their legitimate national rights and interests. We hope that the Israeli and Palestinian sides will take constructive measures and closely coordinate with the international community in its mediating efforts so as to create conditions for easing the tension and reactivating the peace process. China supports a greater role for the Security Council in this respect.

We are concerned about the situation in South Asia. Given the current complex situation, we hope that the countries in the region will strengthen mutual understanding and mutual trust and coexist in peace and amity. As a neighbour of Afghanistan, we have been following the changing Afghan situation closely. We believe that, in order to find a solution to the Afghan issue, the following principles should be observed. First, the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Afghanistan should be ensured. Secondly, the Afghan people should be allowed to decide on a solution independently. Thirdly, the future government in Afghanistan should be broad-based and embody the interests of all ethnic groups in the country; Afghanistan should live in amity with all countries, particularly its neighbours. Fourthly, the solution should serve peace and stability in the region. Fifthly, the United Nations should play a more active role.

Since the beginning of this year, the world economy has clearly slowed down, and the situation has been further aggravated by the incidents of 11 September. Developing countries are finding themselves in increasingly dire straits. The international community must act with a greater sense of urgency and accord higher priority to development.

Developed countries should act more vigorously to promote development. They should adopt effective measures and make greater efforts to revitalize the global economy. We hope that the developed countries will demonstrate a broader vision and a cooperative spirit in providing assistance to developing countries.

In recent years, anti-globalization activities in many parts of the world have increased. In fact, globalization is neither a panacea for development nor a monster causing disaster. The appropriate response to globalization should maximize its advantages and minimize its disadvantages so that all countries can come out winners and prosper side by side. Globalization should benefit all people from all social strata in all countries.

The United Nations has an irreplaceable role to play in international cooperation in response to globalization. It should increase its input in development and work more effectively to fulfil the development objectives set forth in the United Nations Millennium Declaration.

China is supportive of the World Trade Organization's plans to launch a new round of multilateral trade talks. It is our hope that the new round will give full consideration to the concerns and interests of the developing countries.

The Ninth Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Economic Leaders Meeting was held successfully in October in Shanghai, China. The meeting was convened at a critical moment, soon after the incidents of 11 September, when prospects for the global economy seemed grim. Focusing on the theme "Meeting new challenges in the new century: promoting common prosperity through participation and cooperation", the leaders conducted an in-depth exchange of views and reached broad consensus. Having boosted intra-APEC cooperation among the

members and reinforced their resolve to restore economic growth, the meeting sent out a clear, positive signal to markets throughout the world and took a resolute step forward in advancing cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region. The meeting will have a positive and far-reaching impact on Asia-Pacific economic cooperation.

President Jiang Zemin made clear to the world China's future objectives, guiding principles and domestic and foreign policies in the important speech that he delivered on 1 July this year. The principal task for the Chinese people in the new century is to press ahead with the modernization programme, work towards the grand cause of national reunification, safeguard world peace and promote common development.

Indeed, the purpose of China's foreign policy is to safeguard world peace and promote common development. China needs an environment of friendship and good-neighbourliness and external conditions of stability and prosperity. To achieve, and safeguard, such an international environment serves China's national interests. It is also China's duty as a member of the international community.

We believe that all civilizations and social systems in the world can, and should, exist side by side on a long-term basis, complementing one another and making progress together, in a spirit of seeking common ground while putting aside differences.

We stand ready to engage in mutually beneficial cooperation with all countries in the world on an equal footing towards world peace and development, with the aim of achieving common development. Our entry into the World Trade Organization will usher in a completely new phase of our opening-up process.

This year marks the thirtieth anniversary of the restoration of China's lawful seat in the United Nations. Tremendous changes have since taken place in the world, in China and in the United Nations. China's commitment to the Charter of the United Nations, however, remains unchanged. In the new century, China will, as always, vigorously support the work of the United Nations and continue to work together with other Member States for a better world.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency The Right Honourable Jack Straw, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Mr. Straw (United Kingdom): Please allow me warmly to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

This day, 11 November, is the anniversary of the Armistice which ended the slaughter of the First World War and is a day of remembrance here in the United States, in the United Kingdom and across much of the world. It is a day when all of us remember the sacrifice of those who, over the last century, gave their lives that others might live in freedom.

For our parents and grandparents, the end of the Second World War stood as a turning point, a moment to establish a new world order. Their vision was inscribed at the very beginning of the Charter of the United Nations:

> "We the peoples of the United Nations, determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war".

With these words, they founded the international community.

For some of us, the subsequent half-century has been the most peaceful era of our history. Yet we know that no one's freedom can be secure while others suffer.

On this Remembrance Day, we remember something else — the thousands who died just two months ago, on 11 September. A third of the nations represented here in the General Assembly lost citizens at the World Trade Center. But just as our predecessors saw hope in the midst of despair, so we now face the task of building a new and better world.

It is fitting that it was here at the United Nations, on 12 September, that the world began to fight back against the terrorist threat. We showed our joint resolve, in the Security Council and in the General Assembly, when we adopted resolutions demanding that terrorists and those who harbour them be held to account for their evil actions.

I applaud Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), which established the Counter-terrorism Committee and which requires all Member States to respond to the global terrorist threat.

We do surely have to take every effective measure against international terrorist networks, whose malign influence is felt in every part of the globe, not least by adopting a comprehensive convention on terrorism and the draft Nuclear Terrorism Convention.

We also have to confront an unpalatable truth: that we still face a real and immediate danger. The murderous groups who plotted the terrible events of 11 September could strike again at any time. Thus our first duty, to our citizens and to each other, is to defend ourselves against that threat.

When the nations of the world agreed the United Nations Charter, they recognized the right of self-defence in Article 51. It is in exercise of this right that the military coalition is now engaged in action against Al Qaeda and the Taliban regime which harbours them.

Taking military action is always a tough decision. But here it truly was unavoidable, and we all owe a debt of gratitude to President Bush for the steadfast and careful manner in which the United States proceeded.

But in defending the world from terror, we have to do our utmost to spare innocent Afghan people further suffering. For decades, the Afghans have seen their country exploited by outside powers and riven by conflict. In five years, their society has been systematically destroyed by one of the most brutal regimes the world has ever known.

But at last today, the international community is united in its efforts to feed and shelter the millions of refugees through this harsh winter, and it is determined to help build a new Afghanistan.

For the first time in decades, there is consensus in the Security Council as a whole, and among Afghanistan's neighbours, that there should be a broad-based government in Kabul, reflecting Afghanistan's rich ethnic diversity, and that the future of Afghanistan must be put into the hands of the Afghan people. There must be no more Great Games with Afghan people as the pawns, and no more regional rivalries, with Afghan people as the victims.

We know that the one institution in the world which can deliver this better future is here now: the United Nations. We should all give Ambassador Brahimi every support in planning a future that leads to Afghanistan retaking its place as a fully fledged member of the international community, able to protect and promote the interests of all of its people.

That nations have come so closely together to fight terrorism shows how the world is changing. However, we have to build a deeper and wider consensus to tackle the other great issues which we face. It is not just the Afghan people who have been excluded from the values on which the United Nations was founded.

Conflict, poverty, discrimination and injustice still blight the lives of millions in every part of the globe. Individuals' rights, especially women's rights, are ignored with impunity, and then the very structure of communities collapses. Where this happens, where societies disintegrate or States fail, we put at risk the basis of global society itself.

If 11 September teaches us anything, it is surely this: that if we ignore our moral responsibilities to each other, we will be forced later to face painful consequences.

Nowhere is the need for action now more obvious than in Africa. Yes, there has been some progress there. International work on the ground to resolve conflict has brought hope to Sierra Leone and to the Great Lakes region. Responsible Governments working across the continent in partnership with effective international donors have succeeded in reducing poverty. But we should not delude ourselves about the scale of the task that remains in Africa. In sub-Saharan Africa average income today is much lower than it was 30 years ago.

The New Partnership for African Development therefore requires the support of the whole community of nations. Africa deserves the same opportunities that we in the West take for granted. We in the West must acknowledge that while removing barriers to global trade and to finance, we have not always dismantled barriers to dignity and equality. In theory, global free trade should have created the conditions for every economy to exploit its comparative advantage in the world marketplace. In practice, protectionist barriers still survive, especially against trade in agriculture, damaging Africa's interests today, and all our interests tomorrow.

As we meet here in New York, our colleagues at the World Trade Organization meeting in Doha have the opportunity to begin to put these injustices right. Launching a new trade round would be the clearest possible signal of the world's determination to spread the benefits of wealth and of prosperity more fairly.

Our predecessors gave us the United Nations. In the succeeding years, it developed expertise in peacekeeping, in conflict prevention, in human rights and in reconstruction, to consolidate the gains of 1945. My message today is that our generation faces as daunting a task, but a different one. That task is to defeat international terrorism. But to do that we have to combine the agenda of 10 September with the agenda of 11 September, as the Secretary-General emphasized in his powerful speech yesterday. And we must take not only military action, but also diplomatic action to reduce tensions that terrorists exploit.

Nowhere are those tensions greater than in the Middle East. The path to a settlement there is plain. It has to be based on a political process that implements United Nations resolutions. It must deliver security for Israel within recognized borders while at the same time creating a viable Palestinian State. We should give the parties every help to reach a settlement. But our efforts will be wasted unless the parties themselves show the political will to bring violence to a halt, and the political courage to make a deal.

We have seen, in the most graphic and brutal way possible, that chaos in one part of the world can undermine security in all parts of the world. Against that chaos we must set our vision of peaceful cooperation among stable nations. Achieving that vision has now taken on a new urgency. Indeed, we are at a moment of strategic opportunity, which comes no more than once to any generation. We owe it to those who founded the international community to seize this moment. Most of all, we owe it to those who will come after us.

Today we remember with sorrow the sacrifices that earlier generations made. We remember with pride the brave decisions that they took to build a better world for us, and we salute the reconciliation and recovery that followed. My hope is that our children and our grandchildren will look back on this period with no less pride, and that future generations will be able to say that we here faced up to a great evil; we did not duck the decisions we had to take; we established peace in Afghanistan, constructive coexistence in the Middle East and sustained development in Africa. We made the necessary endeavour in the finest tradition of the United Nations.

The United Nations stands for everything the terrorist seeks to destroy. My hope is that our successors will look back on this era and say that we saved succeeding generations from the scourge of terrorism as well as from the scourge of war.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Erkki Tuomioja, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland.

Mr. Tuomioja (Finland): The terrorist attacks of 11 September are going to thoroughly change the world, but we do not yet know how. The aftermath of these events has shown that there are more issues that unite us than issues that separate us. We also know that preventing terrorism and other global threats requires the broadest possible cooperation. The United Nations is the main forum for such cooperation. This was demonstrated immediately after the attacks, when both the General Assembly and the Security Council promptly condemned the terrorist attacks as threats to international peace and security and expressed their readiness to combat all forms of terrorism. Now it is extremely urgent to finalize the negotiations on a comprehensive convention on the suppression of international terrorism. I appeal to everyone to quickly agree on the outstanding draft in question.

Mr. Hor Namhong (Cambodia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

These attacks have also profoundly affected our sense of security, both as Member States and as individuals. Fear and insecurity were globalized overnight. But democratic societies cannot be destroyed by such acts. When faced with threats our common values and democracy will only get stronger. Finland condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, and whoever its victims may be. There is no justification for it.

I extend, on behalf of the Government of Finland, our condolences to the families of the victims, to the citizens of New York and to all Americans, including President Bush. We have expressed our solidarity with the United States, as we would have done with any other country affected by such attacks.

The rapidly changing world and the new threats require changed thinking in the international organizations. We must respond quickly and efficiently to the challenges of the real world. We cannot bury ourselves in old rhetoric and positions when people outside require concrete action and help. International cooperation, after all, benefits all States, big and small.

I hope that the unique coalition and cooperation against terrorism will be reflected on other issues of common concern to us.

The statement in the Millennium Declaration that the United Nations is

> "the indispensable common house of the entire human family, through which we will seek to realize our universal aspirations for peace, cooperation and development" (*resolution 55/2, para. 32*)

is now truer than ever. The fight against terrorism and the Afghan situation are at the top of the United Nations agenda, but there are other issues and processes that require true cooperation in order to be successful. In this context, I would like to underline the establishment of the International Criminal Court and the world conferences on sustainable development, financing for development and children.

One of our common responsibilities is the maintenance of international peace and security. This is one of the issues that unites us and is in everybody's interest. The United Nations is the only international organization with global competence in the area of security policies. Ongoing crises are, however, so complex that they require united efforts and combined resources. This is particularly true of the Middle East, where a return to the peace process is an urgent necessity. To this end, we will have to pressure both parties, as well as those who can influence them.

The complexity of international crises has required a close and comprehensive look by the United Nations at how to improve its performance in peace operations. The whole continuum that reaches from conflict prevention, through crisis management to post-conflict peace-building, with a strong emphasis on preventive action in every phase, requires a fresh approach, as proposed in the report of the Brahimi Panel and in the comprehensive review of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. Finland supports the full implementation of such an approach.

The report of the Secretary-General on the prevention of armed conflicts and its recommendations are important contributions to the core activities of the United Nations. The Secretary-General's call, reiterated by the Security Council, on the development of a comprehensive conflict-prevention strategy is timely and warranted. By the adoption of the Programme for the Prevention of Violent Conflicts, the European Union has underlined its political commitment to pursue conflict prevention as one of the main objectives in its external relations. This is also a good example of mutually supportive actions by the United Nations and the European Union. This is again an issue that requires a holistic view and a system-wide approach.

Finland supports increased focus on the part of the United Nations on crisis prevention and the root causes of conflicts. Promotion of democracy, human rights, the rule of law, increased equality and social development, as well as the prevention of environmental threats and the eradication of poverty, discrimination, racism and impunity, all point in the same direction.

The complexity of current crises — be they in Afghanistan, the Middle East, the Balkans or Africa — and the limited resources available have made different organizations seek cooperation and complementarity in their actions. Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter puts strong emphasis on regional arrangements aimed at dealing with issues relating to international peace and security. The Security Council should utilize such regional arrangements for enforcement action.

The European Union is in the process of developing its own crisis-management capability, in terms of both civilian and military capacities. In this work, Finland, just like the entire European Union, is committed to contributing to international peace and security, in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter.

The European Union has adopted conclusions on its cooperation in conflict prevention and crisis management with the United Nations. Areas and modalities for such cooperation have been identified in close cooperation with the United Nations. It will progress as the European Common Security and Defence Policy develops its focus on substantive issues and concrete needs in a pragmatic manner. This cooperation focuses on conflict prevention, civilian and military aspects of crisis management and on regional crises like the ones in the western Balkans, the Middle East and Africa.

There will be a wider and more concrete scope for cooperation within two years when the European Union achieves its military capability. At present, it is difficult to say what kind of operations the European

Union could or would execute and when it could do so. In Finland's case, our law requires that either the United Nations or the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe mandate such an operation.

In today's complex crises civilian aspects of crisis management have and will become all the more relevant in all organizations. The European Union has developed its civilian capabilities in four priority areas, namely civilian police, strengthening the rule of law, strengthening civilian administration and civil protection. In these areas, the European Union and the United Nations, as well as other international organizations, must also seek synergies and complementarity.

The Millennium Summit and the Millennium Declaration are outstanding achievements in the history of the United Nations. The Declaration manifests a unique commitment to multilateralism by all the Member States of the United Nations. It sets an ambitious agenda and goals for the United Nations for years to come. However, without effective implementation it is only a piece of paper. Its implementation also requires common action and strengthened commitment to multilateralism. The Secretary-General's road map gives us guidance on how to maintain the millennium momentum and how to proceed, although the onus is on the Member States.

This year alone the United Nations has organized five conferences and special sessions and hundreds of other meetings that are an integral part of the follow-up and implementation of the Millennium Declaration. These processes should show the same kind of commitment as was encountered in the Summit. Unfortunately, I have to say that none of these recent conferences and special sessions has come close to reflecting the commitment that was so noticeable in the Millennium Summit. We need invigorated common efforts to genuinely implement the ambitious agenda adopted only a year ago and to uphold multilateralism. I hope we can see improvement in this respect in coming summits and conferences.

The moral and political commitment to the Declaration should lead to its effective implementation. The strong support for these common objectives and our determination to achieve them need much more action in order to become a reality. Such challenges as halving, by the year 2015, the proportion of people living in poverty should not be jeopardized by narrow national interests.

Globalization and harnessing it to benefit all humankind remain one of the major challenges to the international community. A common approach is needed in this work too. We have to learn how to deal with the paradox of democracy spreading across the world, and there is much disillusionment about its workings. The key to explaining this paradox is globalization. It poses a demand to develop strong, new, democratic policies and institutions for international and global governance. They must be developed in the United Nations, but also at the regional level, such as in the European Union.

The Government of Finland recently prepared a study on Finnish policies on globalization. One of its main conclusions was that in resolving multinational crises created by globalization, the role of cooperation between national Governments will be growing, not diminishing. The United Nations is the most universal forum for intergovernmental cooperation. Finland supports the United Nations as one of the central actors in harnessing globalization at the universal level.

The Acting President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Reinaldo Ruggiero, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Italy.

Mr. Ruggiero (Italy): I wish to congratulate the President on his election to head the first session of the General Assembly of the new millennium. I am certain that his experience and commitment will enable us to achieve the high goals that we all share. I also renew the Italian Government's warmest congratulations to Secretary-General Kofi Annan on his receipt of the Nobel Peace Prize. His appointment to a second term to the leadership of the United Nations is both welcome and unanimously appreciated.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belgium addressed the General Assembly yesterday, speaking on behalf of the European Union. Italy fully shares his views and supports his statement.

Like our Belgian colleague and previous speakers, I would like to express once more, on this solemn occasion, to the Government and people of the United States our deep solidarity following the appalling terrorist acts perpetrated against them. We share their suffering over the shocking loss of human life and the sorrow of thousands of families.

These acts defy the most basic values of civil coexistence. We condemn them and reaffirm our full commitment to the fight against international terrorism, a struggle on which the United Nations has conferred full legitimacy. We believe that the United Nations remains the central forum to which we must turn in drafting a comprehensive response to terrorism.

This is why we need strict application of the full range of measures adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council during the days immediately following the 11 September attacks. Resolution 1373 (2001), in particular, must be implemented, urgently and vigorously. I also hope that everyone shows the necessary flexibility to allow a swift conclusion of the negotiations on a comprehensive convention against international terrorism.

On 7 November, by a majority of more than 90 per cent, the Italian Parliament approved the Government's decision to contribute ground troops, naval forces and air units to operations against international terrorism. This confirms my country's awareness that the stakes are high and proves the robustness of our national consensus in facing this challenge. The fight must be conducted in a targeted manner, avoiding the loss of innocent lives, until the objective has been fully achieved, without, however, neglecting humanitarian assistance to the Afghan people, both within the country and in the refugee camps. But the problem of the political future of Afghanistan, a problem to be solved only by the Afghan people, must, of course, remain a high priority in the agenda of the United Nations, together with the objective of regional stability.

But in crafting a credible, diversified global strategy to eradicate international terrorism, we must also search for solutions to the most delicate regional crises and to the global problems that loom over our lives. These include hunger, poverty, ignorance, inequality, underdevelopment, violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms and threats to the environment and health.

At the top of the list of regional crises is the Middle East, an area physically close to Italy, and one to which we pay close attention. Here, we are working both in a national capacity and within the European Union to create, as soon as possible, the conditions for an end to the violence and a true return to negotiations for a comprehensive, lasting peace in the region based on the establishment of a viable and democratic State for the Palestinians and an end to the occupation of their territories and on Israel's right to live in peace and security within internationally recognized borders.

This framework should also include an ambitious plan, like the one adopted to rebuild a devastated Europe in the wake of World War II, for public and private investments and inter-regional assistance towards fostering solidarity among the region's States and peoples — in other words, a new Marshall Plan. Special attention should be paid to the economic and social growth and development of the Palestinian population, to which Italy is fully committed and for which it remains prepared to do more in the future.

In the Balkans, we have noted encouraging progress despite persisting tensions. Our goal there is to prevent destabilizing tendencies and to foster regional cooperation and economic development, including closer ties with the European Union.

As for the challenges of globalization, we should first of all make the success of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial Conference in Doha a primary objective. In fact, many of the global problems I have listed can be alleviated by ensuring that the international market economy and multilateral free trade operate fairly and continue to foster inclusiveness, integration and more equitable and sustainable growth of all countries through agreed rules. This latest WTO round should be one of growth and development, focusing in particular on the problems of the developing and least developed countries.

But in order to assure a better response to globalization's most problematic aspects, other major objectives must be pursued. And the universal organization with the moral authority to meet this challenge is the United Nations.

The first objective is the maintenance of international peace and security. Italy's commitment is strong and long-standing. In fact, we are one of the top three contributors of men and resources to peace operations led and authorized by the United Nations. In this light, we appreciate the reports that the Secretariat has issued in the past two years, which suggest a vision of peace activity as a single, three-sided concept, encompassing conflict prevention, peacekeeping and post-conflict peace-building.

Italy also values the document that the Secretary-General submitted to Member States on the prevention of armed conflicts, emphasizing the direct connection between safeguarding peace and fighting underdevelopment. In fact, no peacekeeping action can achieve lasting results unless it is coupled with measures to strengthen government institutions, safeguard the human, civil and cultural rights of all communities and rebuild the economic and social fibre of affected areas.

The second objective is to foster development and eradicate poverty. We must ensure that all the countries of the world benefit from the opportunities created by interdependencies and progress, in particular in the areas of information and communication technology. The global United Nations conferences of the 1990s laid the groundwork for the definition of poverty as a multidimensional phenomenon. It is not only characterized by low income and consumption, but also a lack of food, health care, schooling and environmental stability. This is a vicious cycle that we must break, through coordinated and integrated initiatives. To reverse the downward spiral, we must enhance both the material and the human dimensions of development.

The Millennium Declaration spells out the objectives to be attained by 2015. Italy has shown its commitment to these goals through the shaping of its international actions and the shouldering of its responsibilities during the year of its G-8 presidency. One example was the substantive outreach initiative at the Genoa Summit, involving a meeting with five African Heads of State and the Secretary-General to discuss the New African Initiative and launch a global fund to combat HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases.

Finally, we must continue to nurture and strengthen development assistance and reach the goal of having the most developed countries dedicate 0.7 per cent of their gross national product to this pursuit. In this context, debt relief is another essential tool to free up the necessary resources in developing countries in order to stimulate their economies, for instance by promoting public investment in health care and schooling. Italy is a leader in this field by virtue of recent laws that allow it to gradually cancel the debt of the poorest countries.

As I said before, the United Nations has the moral authority to take on today's new challenges. This fact was highlighted by the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to the Secretary-General and to the Organization as a whole. However, its structure and procedures must keep pace with the times. Italy believes in the reform of the United Nations, a reform that should affect all of its bodies, including the Security Council. Let me reiterate the need for a comprehensive reform that addresses the relevant issues in all their aspects. Such a reform should be designed to produce greater efficiency, legitimacy and transparency. It should also meet the general expectations of democracy, universality and inclusiveness.

In addition, to create the conditions for stable growth of prosperity and security for all humankind, we need more effective governance of globalization. The documents prepared by the Secretariat make great strides in this direction. Now is the time to translate the commitments of the Millennium Declaration into action. Italy will support every initiative undertaken for this purpose.

Never have we had a better opportunity to solve our problems, yet never have we faced greater risks. The answer does not lie in denying the reality of interdependence and growing globalization. It is within our ability to promote better governance of the international system. Never before has the world had so many human, financial and technological resources at its disposal. The answer lies in our hands, in our collective will.

The Acting President *(spoke in French)*: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Djibouti, Mr. Ali Abdi Farah.

Mr. Farah (Djibouti)*(spoke in French)*: In view of the catastrophic events that took place on 11 September, it is only fitting that first and foremost we once again offer our deepest condolences to the Government and people of the United States. This was a hateful and diabolical act of terrorism that claimed thousands of precious human lives and caused untold physical destruction, without parallel in history. This brutal attack has put us all on notice. It was truly the day the world changed.

One way or another, this tragedy affects us all. Not a single country is immune from terrorism, inasmuch as it is beyond the capacity of any one

country to counter it. The international community must work together, ideally through the United Nations, so that the counter-measures take the form of legitimacy and acceptability. In this respect, Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) provides us with the necessary framework.

We in Djibouti have already established a suitable mechanism to counter terrorism, in all its aspects, that could come from our territory. We are also in the process of examining the existing international conventions and protocols on terrorism with a view to signing and ratifying them all. However, while doing all this, we must not lose sight of the plight of the people of Afghanistan — the terror, the desperation and the starvation facing impoverished people during this grave crisis. Also, we must not squander the extraordinary opportunity we now have to examine all possible or probable causes and deep roots of terrorism, including attitudes, frustrations and current economic and political conditions.

May I join the delegations that preceded me to offer the President our congratulations on his brilliant election as President of the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session. His vast experience and demonstrated capacity and skills will indeed be vital to our deliberations. We also wish to express our appreciation to his predecessor, Mr. Harri Holkeri of Finland, whose leadership at the fifty-fifth session has resulted in tangible achievements.

Permit me also to congratulate Secretary-General Kofi Annan on his re-election and for the work he accomplished during his first term, most notably for the extent to which he was able to institute much-needed reforms and restore the relevance and central role of the United Nations, while enhancing its capacity and effectiveness. He has recognized that far too many people live on the margins of society, reduced to silence by endemic poverty, debt, the AIDS pandemic, tuberculosis and malaria. He has, in effect, become the voice of the world's silent majority. It is not by chance, therefore, that, together with the Organization he heads, he has received the Nobel Peace Prize. We congratulate him wholeheartedly for this distinct and rare honour bestowed upon him and the United Nations system.

May I pay tribute to the Secretary-General for the breadth and relevance of his report on the work of the Organization. The United Nations has a vital role to play in today's rapidly evolving world, and the report offers a comprehensive update on all its activities. With reference to peace and security, as the Secretary-General has stressed, we must all be struck by the number of conflicts raging in the world today. Preventing the recurrence of conflict is a central priority, and this means that our focus needs to shift from a culture of management and control to one of prevention and long-term development.

Besides conflict, we are witness to enormous human suffering caused by natural disasters and complex situations that continue to grow in scale, escalating the need for humanitarian assistance.

We are pleased to note that the Secretary-General continues to place importance on the fight against endemic poverty and that the international community has launched a sustained campaign to make the right to development a palpable reality for everyone. The participation of the poor must become a priority in order to eradicate rural poverty, to ensure the well-being of children and to strengthen the earning potential of women.

If we are to reduce by half the number of people living in poverty by 2015, as called for in the Millennium Declaration, we must substantially increase Official Development Assistance, alleviate the debt burden of the poorest countries and dismantle the protectionist barriers of developed countries. The Least Developed Countries, in particular, face enormous obstacles, such as declining inflows of capital, inadequate social services and the lack of infrastructure, in addition to environmental constraints. In essence, the Brussels Declaration and Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010 call for an increase in foreign capital inflows, including Official Development Assistance; direct foreign investment; an expansion of debt relief; greater preferential market access and increased technical assistance.

Silently but very quickly, the world is drifting towards another dangerous crisis: water scarcity. By 2025, one in every three people worldwide will be affected by the lack of water. Some 2.7 billion people live in regions facing severe water shortages and, once again, Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, which are the most densely populated areas and among the areas of least income, will be the hardest hit. Currently, 450 million people living in 29 countries, including my

own, Djibouti, are experiencing acute drinking water shortages. Unlike oil and most other strategic resources, drinking water has no substitute. Whether water is needed for drinking, agriculture or environment-related purposes, such as the survival of lakes and rivers, we have on our hands a potential crisis that risks causing an unprecedented disaster for food security and the fight against hunger and poverty. A combination of global warming, wasteful habits, aridity and the lack of rainfall means that the water sources millions traditionally rely on are now slowly drying up. There is no longer enough water for all our needs. Beyond the international treaties and institutional mechanisms, the international community must act to mitigate this crisis. Now is the time to act.

While the recent international terrorist attacks in the United States have rightly dominated the world's attention, other pressing problems, such as the AIDS pandemic, must still be urgently attended to. The special session of the General Assembly devoted to this scourge, held in June, took a decisive step towards finding collective solutions, actions and commitments. However, there is still concern that these non-binding commitments may not be carried out. The global AIDS fund launched by the Secretary-General has made some progress, but contributions to date have fallen far short of the expected target. We are now unfortunately familiar with the statistics of deaths and the social and economic devastation caused by this scourge, particularly in Africa. In the search for a solution and what measures to take, the debate has centred on treatment versus prevention. Ideally, the best hope would be for a preventative vaccine, but that solution does not look promising. As one expert put it, "We are at the end of the beginning of this epidemic, not at the beginning of its end!"

The growth and exponential spread of information technology, coupled with the demise of the cold war, have, over the past decade, been determining factors in shaping our views on development and the global economy. With the advent of globalization, trade expanded, capital flowed, investments increased, economies liberalized and barriers to trade were lowered. In addition, the private sector took on a central role.

Unfortunately, as many have correctly observed, the number of countries and individuals excluded from the benefits of this phenomenon has risen inexorably. The attempt to explain this dichotomy has led to many troubling conclusions. For the poverty-stricken who live on $1 per day, talk of technology, economic growth, opportunity and prosperity is no more than nice-sounding words. Their greatest daily concern is the fear of not having enough to eat. Finding enough to eat is a daily challenge for more than three billion people on this planet. Despite the conflicts in Africa currently making headlines, it is the precarious existence of those left behind that has defined life on the African continent for more than two generations.

Whatever the reasons for this endemic poverty, the fact remains that unless we address the problem of poverty in all its aspects, we will not get to the roots of the problem. It is well known that millions of people in Africa and throughout the world are simply too poor to participate in the phenomenon of globalization and thus miss out on the benefits of globalization. The President of the World Bank has aptly put the issue of poverty in perspective:

> "... if you cannot deal with the question of poverty, if you cannot deal with the issue of equity, then you are not dealing with the question of peace."

He added:

> "We will not solve the problems of poverty or global peace or stability unless we change our perception of poor people from the objects of charity to an asset on which you can build a better world."

The persistence and spread of poverty hamper all efforts for peace, security, development, democracy and good governance. Peace and security require increasing and strengthening the United Nations capacity to prevent crises, to react to emerging threats and to implement peace-building programmes. In this regard, the Security Council has a preponderant role. It is obvious that our inability to reform the Council so that it can respond to the needs of the international reality of today can only diminish the legitimacy of its functioning and decisions.

During the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly in September 1999, my President, Ismail Omar Guelleh, outlined a series of proposals on the re-establishment of peace in Somalia. A year later, during the fifty-fifth session, he related to this Assembly the extraordinary sacrifices and burdens borne by the Government and people of Djibouti, together with a

number of Governments and organizations of good will, to bring together the true representatives of the Somali people so that they might seize control of their own destiny and forge a new direction for their devastated country.

Ultimately, after eight months of intense and difficult negotiations at Arta, Djibouti, in August 2000, the Somali State was reborn through the establishment of the Transitional National Government, the National Assembly and other institutions. The course has not been easy, but the Transitional National Government has persisted and pursued its commitments, gaining the respect, sympathy and support of the international community, despite myriad attempts to undermine its efforts to achieve lasting peace.

The Transitional National Government is a reality. It represents the will of the people of Somalia, who have spoken and made their choice. As my President has repeatedly stated, if we wish to save Somalia from disintegration and chaos, we must eschew the standard practice of revolving around a few all-too-familiar individuals who held the Somali people hostage for a decade. He suggested, inter alia, that it was time to move beyond them, to restore power to the people, and for the Somali people to assume leadership and responsibility for their own destiny.

We are gratified that the Transitional National Government is fully committed to bringing about lasting peace in Somalia through a constructive spirit of dialogue and tolerance. Building upon the outcome of the Arta process, the Transitional National Government has consistently and tirelessly demonstrated its unwavering commitment to reconciling with its adversaries without preconditions. Its efforts to that end have been greatly appreciated by the Organization of African Unity and by the Security Council. Both entities have recently condemned those individuals and faction leaders who remain outside the Arta peace process and who stubbornly persist in blocking the peace efforts in Somalia.

In this respect, the efforts of the President of Kenya, Mr. Daniel Arap Moi, earlier this month to bring some of these recalcitrants into the Arta process are to be strongly commended. That is what is expected of us; it is a moral and political duty we owe to the people of Somalia. That was the message of the Security Council's presidential statement on Somalia last month:

> "[T]he situation in Somalia and the objective of long-term regional stability can most effectively be addressed if neighbouring States play a positive role, including in the process of rebuilding national institutions in Somalia." (*S/PRST/2001/30, p. 2*)

While the Republic of Djibouti is not in the habit of challenging anyone on the veracity of information within their purview, it has nonetheless a moral duty to issue a caution about the source, motivation, accuracy, objectivity and reliability of such information, particularly as it relates to the crucial and sensitive issue of the existence of terrorist cells in one country or another. I am convinced that close consultation and cooperation with all countries in the region on this important issue will yield realistic and impartial information in the assessment of any particular situation. It must be pointed out, however, that haste and rash, uncorroborated conclusions will only harm the unity of the international coalition against terrorism, which we all vigorously support.

At a time when the attention of the international community is squarely focused on the issue of terrorism, the brutality and destructive force used against the Palestinians have increased dramatically. Israel has created the conditions for chaos and anarchy to justify its reoccupation and even annexation of Palestinian territory. The recent incursions represent the broadest military operations in years in Palestinian-controlled territory. Each day we drift closer to an unacceptable conflagration between two parties that are unequal in power, means, resources and international influence.

Insisting on a ceasefire without offering anything in return, Israel is determined to pursue its defiance of international opinion. Living conditions in the occupied territories continue to be seriously affected by the Israeli blockade. Rising unemployment, failing businesses, falling incomes, restrictions on the movement of goods and people and the banning of construction while Jewish settlement activities continue all combine to inflame an already incendiary situation. One wonders, therefore, what more the Israelis want to hear than the imploring words of President Arafat: "Let us go back to implementing the accords. Let us go back to saving the peace process with no conditions and no military pressures."

We call on Israel to relinquish Orient House and other Palestinian offices in and around Jerusalem. We also urge it to return to the negotiating table and, among other things, to implement the proposals contained in the Mitchell Committee report. Israel must release the millions of dollars in tax money owed to the Palestinian Authority in order to alleviate the economic and financial hardships inflicted upon the Palestinian people.

In the final analysis, Israel's security largely depends on the implementation of the principle of a viable Palestinian State. We hope that the international community will also commit itself to restoring dignity and respect to the Palestinian people. Like all peoples everywhere, they have a right to live in peace and to enjoy a decent existence.

In our subregion of the Horn of Africa, there has been some reduction in hostilities despite lingering differences and antagonisms. The people in that area of the world have suffered too long and desire nothing more than a relaxation of tensions, the free movement of people and goods, lasting peace, stability, development and cooperation. It is high time that we devoted our meagre resources to development and to improving the living conditions and meeting the needs of our own people. Let us give our people a break and a better future.

Djibouti truly believes in regional cooperation, good-neighbourliness and the opportunities they can afford for all our people. We are committed to working hand in hand with our friends in the subregion to resolve outstanding issues in complete harmony and trust. As a nation, we are challenged by scant resources and declining international assistance, which have been exacerbated by the huge influx of drought-affected people and economic migrants. Our capital city, in particular, is overburdened by an influx of people displaced by drought or political tensions in the region, thus further straining our limited infrastructure and social services. We appeal to the international community to help us overcome these unsustainable challenges and pressures that have been with us for too long and are beyond our limited means.

Mr. Ping (Gabon) *(spoke in French)*: I would like to begin by congratulating the President on his outstanding election to the presidency of the General Assembly at this session. His election reflects the recognition by the international community of the place and the role that the Republic of Korea, a great friend of Gabon, plays in the world and particularly in Asia. I would like to assure him of our full cooperation during his period of office.

To his predecessor, Mr. Harri Holkeri of Finland, I express the satisfaction of my delegation for the excellent work done in the course of the last session.

And to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, I would like to reaffirm the highest appreciation of the Government and the head of State of Gabon, His Excellency El Hadj Omar Bongo, for the dedication and determination with which he has endeavoured to make a reality of the ideals of peace, justice and welfare contained in the United Nations Charter. The Nobel Peace Prize, which has just been awarded to him as well as to the United Nations, is eloquent testimony to the work being done by the United Nations system to promote peace and build a more prosperous world. He can rest assured of Gabon's support for his efforts in the service of the United Nations.

It is little more than a year ago that the heads of State and Government of the Member States of the United Nations met here in New York at the historic Millennium Summit. On that occasion, they laid down the guidelines for the future work of the international community and reaffirmed their commitment to the purposes and principles set forth in the Charter of our Organization. The Millennium Summit thus enabled our nations to renew their commitment to act in unity and solidarity in order to take up the numerous challenges facing the world.

The tragedy which took place on 11 September 2001 in the United States of America has, more than ever, strengthened our determination to combat international terrorism. We must put an end to it by all possible means — military, diplomatic and political. It is for this reason that Gabon unreservedly supports Security Council resolutions 1368 (2001) and 1373 (2001) as well as the adoption of a comprehensive convention on terrorism.

There is no possible doubt that the coalition which has been created will be victorious in the fight against terrorism. In this surge of solidarity, the international community must, in parallel, find appropriate responses to the world problems that can serve as a pretext for certain radical groups. There is an urgent need to act to find solutions to the conflicts and economic and social problems of our time.

As far as armed conflicts are concerned, we are convinced that if illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons could be ended, it would be easier to arrive at a prompt and lasting settlement. The implementation by everyone of the recommendations of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held here in New York last July, would enable us to reach that goal.

Faithful to the commitment of President Omar Bongo, Gabon remains committed to and involved in efforts to restore peace in the world, particularly in Africa. Here, I would like to express our satisfaction at the return of peace to Congo (Brazzaville) following a national dialogue involving all parties, under the auspices of the international mediator. The stability which has been restored to this brother country has made possible the voluntary return of the numerous Congolese refugees from my country to their homes since August, thanks to excellent cooperation between the High Commissioner for Refugees, the Gabonese authorities and the Congolese authorities. Similarly, we welcome the significant progress that has been made in the Burundi peace process, which on 1 November 2001 culminated in the establishment of a transitional government.

I would like to pay deserved tribute to former President Nelson Mandela for the dedication and determination with which he conducted the process to that important stage. For his part, the President of the Gabonese Republic will, at the request of the members of the Burundi Peace Initiative, pursue his efforts with a view to consolidating the peace process in that country.

Concerning the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, we welcome the important efforts already undertaken in establishing the United Nations peacekeeping mission. We earnestly hope that the Johannesburg phase will make possible the start of an effective inter-Congolese dialogue.

The situation in the Middle East, because of the threat it presents to international peace and security, is also a source of deep concern. I therefore urge the parties to resume negotiations, the only way to arrive at a lasting peace.

At the very moment when the process of globalization of financial markets and trade is affecting every aspect of the life of our societies, one must recognize that an ever-growing number of the world's peoples risk being marginalized if concrete measures are not taken on their behalf. The international community therefore needs to mobilize new and additional resources to enable them to narrow considerably the gap separating them from others. The forthcoming International Conference on Financing for Development, scheduled for March 2002 at Monterrey, Mexico, accordingly arouses great hopes. If this important conference is well prepared, it will help us to satisfy these legitimate expectations.

Leaders have understood that Africa holds the key to its own development. The creation of the African Union and the New Partnership for Africa's Development are part of this logic. Much remains to be done for development to blossom, but the foundations have already been laid. To achieve full success, however, Africa needs the assistance of the United Nations and the international community.

Another question vital to our planet's future at the beginning of the third millennium is that of the protection and preservation of the environment. The World Summit on Sustainable Development, which is to be held in Johannesburg from 2 to 11 September 2002, will provide us a further opportunity to evaluate the progress made in implementing policies reflecting the commitments we undertook in Rio de Janeiro 10 years ago. What conclusions will we be able to draw as to the implementation of Agenda 21? What chance of success will we be prepared to give the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, and the Convention on Biodiversity? In other words, what we must do is to respond more simply and directly to the issue of the choices and concessions we are prepared to make to be able to pass on to future generations a preserved environment that is similar to the heritage we ourselves received from our fathers.

Any efforts made by the countries of Africa to ensure better economic growth will be in vain if no large-scale effort is mounted against such diseases as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and, not to be forgotten, arterial hypertension, which is another of the main causes of death in Africa. There is therefore an urgent need to implement the United Nations recommendations on AIDS, particularly with regard to care, support and treatment. There is also an urgent

need to make operational the special Trust Fund created for that purpose.

At a time when the United Nations, and in particular the Security Council — the body primarily responsible for the maintenance of peace in the world — is increasingly called upon to take on the numerous challenges posed by the third millennium, the matter of reforming that body continues to be highly relevant. Indeed, it is difficult to conceive how a continent like Africa can be without permanent representation on the Council.

The reality of today's world, divided between universalism and particular interests and identities, clearly illustrates that humanity is still searching for harmony and unity. That is why we are firmly convinced that a solution to the concerns I have just mentioned is to be found in the international community's promotion of the virtues of dialogue and solidarity, which are the pillars of the new humanism. Without respect for those values, the dream cherished by the founders of our Organization to build a peaceful and united world will remain a chimera. Working towards establishing a new humanity free from selfishness, hatred, passions and injustice must constitute our common concern.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization and President of the Palestinian Authority.

Mr. Arafat (Palestine) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to begin by extending my congratulations to you, Mr. President, on your election as President of the General Assembly at this session. I would also like to extend my congratulations to Mr. Kofi Annan on his re-election to a second term as Secretary-General of the United Nations. I also wish to congratulate him and the United Nations on being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

It is important for me to be here today at this meeting, which is being held in very critical and important circumstances in the aftermath of the horrific, criminal and ugly terrorist acts against the cities of New York and Washington, D.C., on 11 September 2001. We strongly condemn those acts. In this context, I would once more like to extend our deepest and warmest sympathy to President George W. Bush and to the Government and the friendly people of the United States. In particular, I wish to express my condolences to the families of the victims.

The Palestinian people have expressed their readiness to confront all forms and manifestations of international terrorism, including State-organized terror, in order to build a new world that guarantees justice, peace, security and freedom for all peoples — a new world based on human rights and international legality. We call on all nations to coordinate their efforts within the framework of the United Nations and international legality and the need to pursue and encourage a dialogue between all nations, religions and civilizations.

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to President George W. Bush for the declaration contained in the statement he made yesterday with regard to the need to achieve a just peace based on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978) and on the basis of a two-State solution — Israel and Palestine — and with regard to expeditiously resuming the peace process. For our part, we will exert every possible effort to achieve those objectives. We have worked to provide the best possible conditions for that endeavour, and we will continue to do so.

I would also like to salute, and extend my appreciation to, all my brothers who have preceded me and clearly and eloquently made references to the question of the Palestinian people and their right to realize their legitimate rights under international legality.

Last year I had the honour of addressing the United Nations Millennium Summit. Today I am once again addressing the Assembly, bringing the pain of the Palestinian people and their just cause, which still awaits a just solution. As Members will recall, in 1947 the General Assembly adopted resolution 181 (III), which provided for the partition of Palestine into two States — one Jewish and the other Palestinian. But the Palestinian State has still not been recognized by the United Nations. The Palestinian people faced tremendous historic injustice, and the majority of them were uprooted from their homes and made refugees.

The Palestinian people continue to seek their rights to self-determination and return — rights that today form the backbone of all relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, international

law and international humanitarian law and that should be exercised on the Palestinian national soil. Members are aware that we have accepted the solution provided for by international legality. Yes, we have accepted less than 25 per cent of historic Palestine, while the General Assembly granted us almost 50 per cent of historic Palestine, as provided for in resolution 181 (III). On this new approach, we went to the Madrid Peace Conference, which was based on the principle of "land for peace" and which had the objective of implementing all relevant international resolutions related to Palestine, particularly Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 425 (1978) and General Assembly resolution 194 (III) concerning the Palestinian refugees. Then we signed the Oslo Agreement at the White House in Washington, D.C., in the presence of and witnessed by representatives of the United States of America, the Russian Federation, the European Union, China, Japan, Egypt, Jordan and other countries, including Arab, African, Asian and Latin America States.

Later we signed a number of agreements and memorandums of understanding. After the assassination of my late partner, Mr. Yitzhak Rabin — my partner in the peace process — consecutive Israeli Governments clearly took the path of non-compliance and did not implement Israel's obligations stemming from the signed agreements. This impeded our sincere efforts to reach a comprehensive, just and lasting peace — the peace of the brave. The number of settlements and settlers has doubled since the start of the peace process. This reflects the lack of seriousness of the Israeli Government and its lack of commitment to the agreements signed between us.

Then came Sharon's visit to the holy sanctuary in Holy Jerusalem. I had personally and officially warned the Israeli Government of the grave consequences that would have on the peace process and the region. This action sparked the Palestinian intifada, reflecting the rejection by the Palestinian people of the Israeli Government's non-compliance with the agreements signed, the settlement policies, which deepen the occupation rather than end it by withdrawing from the occupied Palestinian territory, and its policies of undermining our Christian and Muslim Holy Places.

The current Israeli Government continues the aggression against the Palestinian people begun by the previous Government. State terror is being practised against the Palestinian people and land, using the might of the Israeli army, including F-15s, F-16s, Apache helicopters, tanks, missiles, armoured vehicles, navy vessels and lethal weapons, including those that are internationally banned. Practices of the Israeli army also include the assassination of Palestinian political leaders, the demolition of homes, the destruction of private and government institutions, ruining farms and fields and uprooting hundreds of thousands of olive and fruit trees, as well as the killing of women, children and the elderly. There have been approximately 1,800 Palestinians killed and 37,000 wounded. Many of them have been handicapped for life. Thousands have been arrested in only 13 months.

It should also be noted that the Palestinian economy has been devastated. The losses amount to $7 billion as a result of all forms of economic, financial, medical and food closures and sieges imposed on all the Palestinian cities, villages and refugee camps. These practices continue to restrict the movement of goods and people, including students and teachers who are prevented from reaching their schools and universities. All these acts of closure and siege have recently been tightened. Our international borders, checkpoints and airports have been closed. All these measures violate outright basic human rights. Workers have also been prevented from reaching their work places, their means to sustain their families and children.

Facing this aggression, escalation and the bloody war of State terror being waged by the Israeli Government against our people, land, Holy Places, — Jerusalem in particular — and Bethlehem, Beit Jala, Hebron and other Palestinian towns, the incursion into our cities, villages and refugee camps with tanks and the brutal massacres committed in various locations in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, we call on the international community, as represented by all present, and on the peace-, freedom- and justice-loving people who defend human rights and dignity throughout the world to work sincerely and resolutely and to exert all possible efforts to stop this war of aggression and to send international observers to protect our people from the occupation, terror and ethnic cleansing practised by Israel and to supervise the implementation and the consolidation of the ceasefire, by which we are abiding and which has been consistently violated by the Israeli Government.

International sponsorship of the Middle East peace process is the only true guarantee for efforts by

the international community to make peace an established reality in our region. The absence of international involvement in this conflict — in the serious search for a solution to the Palestinian question, in accordance with justice and the principles of international law — will push the region back into a spiral of violence, confrontation and bloodshed and could make the situation more explosive and fragile.

Therefore, I call upon the international community to redouble its sincere efforts to end the current situation and the escalating crisis that, in the absence of the peace process, threatens to explode, with grave consequences for our region. The active involvement of the international community and the influential Great Powers is essential to save the peace process and to put it back on the right track, to move it forward sincerely, resolutely and effectively. Lasting peace will not be achieved or sustained without international legality to provide an effective and binding international mechanism to implement the relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions. The accurate and honest implementation of these resolutions will establish and sustain peace and will prevent bloodshed in our region.

Proceeding from our belief in peace as an irreversible strategic choice of our people, we have cooperated fully and positively with all international efforts and initiatives, including the Egyptian-Jordanian initiative, the Tenet Understandings and the Mitchell Report, which we accepted as a comprehensive, integrated package. We have also unilaterally declared an immediate comprehensive ceasefire, and we have exerted maximum efforts to sustain that ceasefire. On the eve of the Jewish New Year, we initiated the Palestinian call for peace, offered our sincere congratulations to the Israeli people and called upon them to make the New Year an occasion for a new era of peace, security and peaceful coexistence between the Palestinian and Israeli peoples and the peoples of the whole Middle East region. We made very clear and unequivocal our strategic commitment to peace, negotiations and the political solution to all outstanding issues between us and the Government of Israel.

Most regrettably, the Israeli Government instructed its war generals and army to escalate the military campaign against our people, cities, villages and refugee camps. This included the buffer zones and the siege that closed off wide areas of cities, villages and cultivated lands and led to the destruction of our farms and the uprooting of thousands of trees in various places in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

Allow me to extend my deepest appreciation and to salute sincerely all the brotherly, friendly nations and to the Great Powers that have realized today, more than ever before, that the establishment of an independent Palestinian State, with Holy Jerusalem as its capital, is the only guarantee for peace, security and stability in the region and the world. This constitutes a basic cornerstone in establishing and sustaining that peace.

We call upon these nations, particularly the United States, the United Kingdom, the Russian Federation, France, China, Japan, the members of the European Union and the non-aligned countries, the international community, individually and collectively, to exert every possible effort to translate this vision into action and political reality in order to enable the Palestinian people to live in peace, dignity, freedom, independence and sovereignty within their independent State on their national soil, with Holy Jerusalem as its capital. This can be achieved by bringing Israel, the occupying Power, to withdraw fully from all of the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories, including Holy Jerusalem, to the boundaries of 4 June 1967, in accordance with the principles of the Madrid Peace Conference, to end settlement activities and evacuate settlers from our land, and to guarantee the right of return to the Palestinian refugees, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 194 (III), which provided for this right and called for compensation to those not wishing to return.

We welcome the positive positions taken by President George W. Bush and other leaders who have called for the establishment of a Palestinian State. We believe this constitutes a significant step towards ending the conflict and establishing peace in the Middle East. I will say candidly to you that reviving and completing the peace process will need a new qualitative push, and after all that has happened it will not be possible to confine ourselves to interim solutions. It is impossible, of course, to achieve another interim agreement, as called for by some. To control the situation on the ground and to get the situation back to the way it existed before 28 September 2000 requires clear political imagination and new hope.

What the peace process now requires to achieve a just and lasting peace is a genuine effort on the part of the co-sponsors of the peace process — the United States and the Russian Federation — as well as influential international actors, including the European Union, and of course the Arab and Muslim countries and other friendly nations in the Non-Aligned Movement as well as in the United Nations. All of them should immediately introduce a comprehensive framework for a permanent final solution based on international legality and the agreements signed so that both parties can negotiate expeditiously the details of that permanent solution. This, of course, should be preceded by the full and immediate implementation of the Mitchell Report and the Tenet Understandings.

It is clear that we are in need of greater international efforts, including an international presence on the ground, to help the parties move forward. In any case, the United Nations and the Secretary-General must carry out their natural and important roles in this regard so that we can achieve our desired peace objectives. I call upon the Israeli Government and the Israeli people to respond positively to this approach so that we can together build peace in the land of peace, the Holy Land of peace — the Holy Land; I repeat, the Holy Land.

Needless to say, we need an expeditious effort that brooks no further delay, especially at the current international situation. We are ready to carry out our share of responsibility. We trust you are also ready to shoulder your share of responsibility. I realize that the international community, after the assassination of my partner, Yitzhak Rabin, is looking forward to the peace process. From here I convey to the Israeli people my full commitment to the peace process, which I began with my late partner Yitzhak Rabin, and my partner Shimon Peres, a peace that guarantees freedom, stability and security for the Israelis and the Palestinians and all the peoples in the Middle East region — the peace of the brave; the just and comprehensive and lasting peace that will end the Israeli occupation of all the Palestinian and Arab territories and will lead to the establishment of the independent Palestinian State with Holy Jerusalem as its capital.

This is what we should be working for, for the sake of our children and their children. From here I call upon the Israeli Government to resume the final status negotiations in order to implement the resolutions of international legality and the agreements signed.

I salute all of you and hope that this session will produce the required solutions and recommendations which will enable our peoples and our nations and the whole of humanity to live in peace, stability, progress and prosperity.

May peace and God's blessing be with you.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.

United Nations A/56/PV.47

General Assembly

Official Records

Fifty-sixth session

47th plenary meeting
Sunday, 11 November 2001, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Han Seung-soo ..... (Republic of Korea)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Address by Mr. Alfonso Portillo Cabrera, President of the Republic of Guatemala

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Guatemala.

Mr. Alfonso Portillo Cabrera, President of the Republic of Guatemala, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Alfonso Portillo Cabrera, President of the Republic of Guatemala, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Portillo Cabrera (*spoke in Spanish*): Let me first condemn the monstrous attack on the people and the Government of our host country. In condemning it in the strongest possible terms, we declare ourselves in full solidarity with the people and the Government of the United States, the families of each and every one of the victims, whatever his or her nationality, and the residents of this great city of New York. We also associate ourselves unreservedly with the resolutions adopted last month by the Assembly and the Security Council. We will carry on in our commitment to the elimination of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

Before taking up our Government programme and the fulfilment of the Peace Agreements, and our position on certain of the items on the agenda for this session, I wish to warmly congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly. I have no doubt that your well-proven capabilities and your recognized wisdom will enable you to bring our deliberations to a fully successful outcome.

I wish further to join the representatives who have taken the floor before me in commending the Secretary-General of our Organization, Mr. Kofi Annan for his wise leadership. We hail his well-deserved re-election and rejoice at the recognition that both he and the Organization have received, through the award of the Nobel Peace Prize.

I come, like many of those gathered here, from a small country that mirrors the grave problems facing today's world. Today we still do not enjoy the major benefits of the great scientific and technological advances, and we still suffer from great social inequalities. Ours is a small country that is doing its best to attain peace and democracy — a country that believes in the rewards of economic freedom, but also in social justice. It is a country that has opened itself up to the world, although the world has perhaps not opened itself up reciprocally in the same way. It is a country that works and produces by making great efforts but that, in the present circumstances, is receiving less and less for those efforts.

In this context, our contribution to world peace and democracy is diminished to the same extent that inequality, social injustice and poverty imperil our peace and our democracy.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

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Today the struggle against terrorism is the struggle against inequality in international economic relations; it is the struggle against ignorance, injustice, discrimination, intolerance, exclusion and poverty. There will be no peace if we do not eradicate these scourges. A peace that goes hand in hand with inequality, poverty and injustice is a bad peace. And let us not forget that a bad peace is worse than war.

We are making strenuous efforts to advance in implementing our own Peace Agreements, which coincide with our Government programme. The time that has elapsed since I addressed the Millennium Summit has witnessed intensive activities. I can point to significant progress, but I must also admit to some setbacks, which are due primarily to an unfavourable international environment, which has affected the economy in an extremely adverse way. I draw attention to this situation, because full compliance with the commitments contained in the Peace Agreements would be far easier in a context of economic growth than in the framework of serious fiscal restrictions and increasing demands on the Government.

On a different matter, I would like to comment briefly on the United Nations presence in Guatemala. I wish to reiterate how much we appreciate the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA). We trust that its mandate will be extended until the end of 2003 so that we can in a progressive and orderly way transfer its functions both to national institutions and, wherever possible, to the United Nations programmes and agencies.

As far as our international relations are concerned, I would like to mention the significant progress made in the process of finding a peaceful resolution to the historical dispute between ourselves and Belize. In keeping with the principles of peaceful settlement of disputes between States, we have confirmed with deeds our commitment to dialogue as the way of settling disputes. The commission of facilitators appointed last year, within the framework of the regional organization to which both States belong, the Organization of American States, will soon submit its report. Its fundamental aim is to work out and prepare courses of action to make progress in resolving the dispute.

We reiterate our firm support for Central American integration and our commitment to the rest of Latin America and the Caribbean. Our Government has supported major initiatives in the area of regional and subregional integration, and is working hard to overcome problems left over from age-old border disputes in Central America.

As to our position on other international conflicts, we voice the hope that the differences or divisions that persist between fraternal peoples in the Middle East, Asia and Africa will yield to resolution peacefully through dialogue. I also wish to take this opportunity to reiterate before this Assembly our concern over the situation of the 23 million citizens of the Republic of China on Taiwan, whose aspiration to be represented in international organizations has not yet been fully satisfied. The Central American countries in general, and Guatemala in particular, believe they could indeed make a positive contribution to peace and democracy in the world.

I would now like to comment briefly on our views regarding the principal issues with which this Assembly will have to deal at the current session. First, I reiterate our full support for the United Nations as the supreme expression of multilateralism. We are convinced that the United Nations will have a crucial role to play in the twenty-first century. It is our view that the Millennium Declaration that our heads of State and Government issued a year ago offers the right agenda for our priorities and for the steps to be taken to attain the goals set.

Second, we agree that it is necessary to adapt the Organization to the exigencies of globalization and to this post-cold-war era. It is up to us, the Member Governments, to further this process of adaptation in various areas, such as intergovernmental forums, the efficiency and efficacy of the Secretariat, the setting of priorities in shaping the programme of activities and the financial strengthening of the Organization.

Third, of the pending reforms, the one that has received the most attention is that concerning the Security Council. One cannot but be frustrated at the limited progress made in this area at previous sessions of the General Assembly. Now more than ever before we must redouble our efforts to endow that body with greater efficacy, broader representativity and more transparency in its working procedures. To achieve these objectives, we advocate, inter alia, an increase in the number of Council members, as well as a very sparse use of the veto power. We also believe that now

more than ever before it is necessary that the Security Council's work be monitored by the General Assembly.

Fourth, deeply shocked by the events that occurred in this country on 11 September, we reiterate our full and complete opposition to terrorism, and we will support any collective action by the international community to combat this scourge. As a matter of fact, we are already working to comply with the spirit and the letter of the undertakings embodied in Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), within the parameters of a democratic society that aspires to guarantee the human rights of its members.

Fifth, we advocate the strengthening of the General Assembly, and we congratulate the President of its fifty-fifth session on his initiative to revitalize its working methods and procedures. We trust that this action will continue under the current presidency and that it will extend to the wider task of reforming the Assembly, in pursuance of the aims of the Millennium Declaration.

Sixth, we are convinced of the need to strengthen our collective capacity to prevent and resolve conflicts, both between States and at the national level. We believe that the report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations provides an adequate basis for achieving this purpose.

Seventh, as regards general disarmament, we insist on the need for progress towards the total elimination of nuclear, chemical and bacteriological weapons, the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, and the use of anti-personnel mines and other explosive devices. In this connection, we support all concrete actions by the United Nations to accomplish these aims, including those that look to the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in all regions of the world. As regards the control of illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, we are of the view that the results of the Conference held last July to deal with this problem, while positive if allowance is made for this being the first step taken at the global level to deal with the matter, are nevertheless inadequate.

Eighth, we offer our full support for and active participation in the principal meetings scheduled for the years ahead, among which I wish to highlight the International Conference on Financing for Development, to be held in Monterrey, Mexico, next March, as well as the World Summit on Sustainable Development, to be held in Johannesburg.

Ninth, in a world characterized by ever greater interdependence, multilateral diplomacy plays a crucial role in the fight against environmental degradation. Guatemala, as a party to the main international treaties relating to the environment, reiterates its commitment to the maintenance of ecological balance.

Finally, we consider that the United Nations should continue devoting itself to what we call the great unfinished business of the twentieth century — namely, the elimination of world poverty. Together with the multilateral financial agencies, our Organization should play a crucial role in ensuring that the benefits of globalization are widely shared among all countries, not only among a few of them; this requires action at the level of each country and at the international level.

Mr. Hussein (Ethiopia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Given the globalization process the world is going through, we must recognize, as stated by the great Mexican thinker Carlos Fuentes, that unregulated globalization leads to more profound economic and social imbalance. We cannot turn economic policy into a mere balancing of accounts in which human beings and populations are not taken into consideration. How can we make demands on some countries when those demands are not made of others in similar conditions?

Civilization is being put to the test. The question is how to eliminate the universal threat posed by terrorism and at the same time maintain and renew the ethical, political, legal and social bases for ensuring coexistence in a globalized world. The only solution is to focus on fighting for more freedom, more democracy, more tolerance and more justice. In this respect, I would like to share with the Assembly the words of a distinguished Guatemalan poet, Otto René Castillo:

> "We have suffered in so many places the blows of the executioner and written his name so many times on so little skin, that we cannot die, for liberty has no death".

May God bless and protect us.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Guatemala for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Alfonso Portillo Cabrera, President of the Republic of Guatemala, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Agenda item 9 (*continued*)

General debate

Address by Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Acting Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the State of Kuwait

The Acting President *(spoke in Arabic)*: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Acting Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the State of Kuwait.

Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Acting Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the State of Kuwait, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*)**:** I have great pleasure in welcoming Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Acting Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the State of Kuwait, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah *(spoke in Arabic)*: On behalf of the State of Kuwait, it gives me pleasure to congratulate Mr. Han Seung-soo, and his friendly country, the Republic of Korea, on his election as President of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. The office he holds undoubtedly carries enormous responsibility. My delegation offers him all the support and cooperation he needs to fulfil his mandate. I wish here to pay tribute to his predecessor, Mr. Harri Holkeri, for his efficient stewardship of the last session of the Assembly.

Let me take this opportunity to warmly congratulate Secretary-General Kofi Annan, jointly with the United Nations, on the well-deserved award of the Nobel Peace Prize, and on his unprecedented early re-election to a second term. The renewal of Mr. Annan's mandate by the international community reflects deep confidence in his character and capabilities, in addition to recognition of his past record. We look forward to continuing to see him bring into play his creative perspective in addressing a whole array of complete and interrelated issues facing our world.

Many of the questions and challenges facing our countries nowadays involve implications and risks that cut across national borders of sovereign countries. It is little wonder that our world has become a smaller planet where geographical boundaries, cultural diversity, economic status and ethnic multiplicity have become lesser factors in shielding communities against global influences and, by the same token, have provided larger platforms for interaction with others. The fact that the world community is now seized with fighting terrorism is perhaps yet further compelling and clear evidence of the deep interaction among and complexity of States' interests and concerns. The strong condemnation of the heinous terrorist acts committed against the United States of America on 11 September 2001 reflects the international community's recognition that the real target of that assault is the political, economic and social stability of the world order. Indeed, those attacks affected, without discrimination, virtually all nation States, all continents, all civilizations, all religions and all races.

Kuwait, for its part, has had a long-standing and firm position of total and unequivocal condemnation of terrorism, irrespective of its form or manifestation. Thus, only hours after the commission of those criminal acts, which contravene and violate every religious concept and every cultural and humanitarian value system, the Government and people of Kuwait condemned them. I wish to reiterate here our deep sympathies and condolences to the bereaved families and to the friendly people of the United States of America. Let me reaffirm our full backing and support for all the efforts and measures adopted by the international coalition to destroy the dens and bases of terrorism with a view to stamping out its roots, to apprehend the perpetrators of these criminal acts and to bring them to justice. In this regard, we call for the completion of work on the development of a rigorous international legal system with which all countries of the world would comply in good faith to eradicate this evil.

In compliance with Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), Kuwait has enacted specific measures to plug any loopholes that might be abused in charitable fund-raising activities and to ensure that any charity asset is used solely and exclusively for its original

legitimate purposes. Our competent authorities are now in the process of taking further enforcement measures to ensure universal and strict compliance.

At a time when we condemn all acts of terrorism, we have been truly surprised to hear some voices that have started to mount intense and relentless campaigns linking terrorism with Islam. Those allegations represent an obvious mistreatment of and injustice to a divine faith revealed by God Almighty to humankind to ensure mercy and compassion on this planet. Islam is a faith that advocates peace, calls for tolerance, promotes amity and renounces bigotry and extremism. Suffice it to cite one verse from *The Holy Koran*:

> "Invite (all) to the Way
> Of thy Lord with wisdom
> And beautiful preaching" (*The Holy Koran, XVI.125*)

Therefore, we really cannot accept these tendencies in the domestic or international mass media, regardless of any excuse or pretext. Indeed, it is our common responsibility to challenge such pernicious campaigns in the interest of global social harmony.

An effective fight against terrorism requires maximum international cooperation and coordination. It also demands a soul-searching review of our political, economic and social policies and practices in dealing with current global challenges. The aim is to deny evil-doers any reason to carry out their terror schemes to advance their own agendas.

While we stress the importance and relevance of all United Nations resolutions and instruments relating to the suppression of terrorism, Kuwait endorses the call to convene an international conference on terrorism. A key purpose of that proposed meeting would be to set out a clear definition of terrorism that draws a line between terrorism as a phenomenon that strikes at international peace and security and the right of peoples to struggle against occupation with a view to achieving self-determination, in line with the Charter of the United Nations and the norms of international law.

Kuwait is in full sympathy with the friendly people of Afghanistan, who have endured a great and steady decline in their living conditions for over 20 years. The relentless conflicts and wars that have afflicted Afghanistan for too long have destroyed the infrastructure and resources of that country. In response to the appeal of the Secretary-General seeking resources to meet the severe humanitarian crisis of the Afghan people, the Government of Kuwait has announced a donation of $3 million in support of international humanitarian relief efforts. Three shipments of relief aid have also been sent to the Afghan refugees. These supplies are distributed in coordination with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Furthermore, back in Kuwait, we are organizing a public fund-raising campaign to solicit donations from individuals and private companies to alleviate the suffering of the Afghan people. The total yield of that effort now stands at over $8 million.

With regard to the overall situation in Afghanistan, Kuwait maintains that international efforts should be maximized to bring about the long-awaited peace and security. National reconciliation and a national coalition Government, elected by the people of Afghanistan, that represent all factions and ethnic groups are perhaps the most viable means to ensure the sustainability of the country and eventually its recovery of normal status within the region and the world. Only then will the nation of Afghanistan be able to channel its energy and resources towards reconstruction and development.

In the meantime, while we express our deep regret for the civilian casualties among the Afghan population, we sincerely hope that the ongoing military operations against the bastions of terrorism and the terrorists will cause no injuries to innocent, unarmed people who are totally powerless and helpless.

Kuwait views the environment as a key common heritage and destiny that must be preserved for future generations. The bitter recent experience of the Gulf region, where two devastating wars took place, has left wide-scale environmental damage. Against this background, Kuwait sponsored a draft resolution submitted to the General Assembly to designate 6 November of each year as the International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict. Kuwait is grateful that the resolution was adopted by consensus. It is our hope that this initiative will help to further promote a deeper universal awareness of the need to safeguard our environment, which is the source of human life now and in the future.

The eyes of the world have been fixed for over one year now on the valiant uprising of the Palestinian people, which arose as a natural and legitimate response to the continued Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories and to the backtracking of the Israeli Government from the accords it signed with the Palestinian side.

The obvious policy of the Government of Israel is to reject any Palestinian, regional or international initiative. Instead, it counts as a matter of policy on the use of force; state terrorism and the creation of faits accomplis on the ground. It slams every door that is opened, designs new oppressive measures and triggers one crisis after another. Its overriding goal is to abort the peace promise born in Madrid in 1991. Israel's barbaric practices, its blatant challenge to all United Nations resolutions and its excessive and unwarranted use of lethal force in response to stone-throwing Palestinians have all combined to create an overwhelming sense of despair, frustration and gloom in the Palestinian ranks.

Here one must ponder the hard lessons we have all learned from similar situations of unalloyed gloom and doom. It is precisely against this backdrop that the United Nations, the international community and the United States in particular, as a co-sponsor of the Middle East peace process, must assume a special international responsibility to mount an effective and meaningful drive to force Israel to fulfil its undertakings and commitments set forth in its bilateral agreements with the Palestinian Authority, as well as to implement Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, including those relating to the city of Jerusalem, with a view to preserving its Arab and Islamic character and its holy religious identity. Kuwait therefore welcomes the indications of support by the United States for the establishment of an independent Palestinian State. We hope that this declared position will now be translated into concrete steps that will move the whole peace process forward towards its long-awaited outcome.

In this context, let me stress that Kuwait will continue to support our Palestinian brothers and to provide all possible political and material assistance to them until they attain all their legitimate political rights, including the establishment of an independent Palestinian State on their own territory, with Jerusalem as its capital. In the same vein, Israel must unconditionally withdraw from the Syrian Arab Golan and the Lebanese Shab'a farms.

The main objective of Kuwait's foreign policy is to consolidate security and stability throughout the Arabian Gulf region. This goal will remain unmet unless and until Iraq implements all relevant Security Council resolutions. It is, indeed, regrettable that the Government of Iraq persists in its allegations that it has carried out all its obligations under those resolutions. In addition, that Government continues to pursue its long-standing hostile practices and policies towards Kuwait in order to heighten regional tension and to destabilize security and peace. Kuwait has repeatedly drawn the attention of the Security Council and the Secretary-General to the non-peaceful intentions of Iraq, as exemplified by the recurrent threats made to Kuwait's security and sovereignty by many high-level Iraqi Government officials. Kuwait has also called on the Security Council to bring pressure to bear on the Iraqi Government so that it will honour all its obligations and thereby make it possible to lift the sanctions affecting the brotherly people of Iraq and to permit that country to reclaim its normal status as an active member regionally and internationally.

When we discuss here the suffering of children, women and the elderly, Kuwait cannot but recall its own excruciating experience, endured over the past decade, relating to the question of Kuwaiti and third-country prisoners and hostages. In fact, this is a key obligation that Iraq has so far failed to fulfil. This issue remains a top national priority for the Government and people of Kuwait.

The humanitarian nature of this long-running issue — the anguish that it is causing to the immediate families of the prisoners and to our entire population — means that resolution of the problem cannot be delayed any longer. The Government of Iraq alone bears responsibility for the lack of any meaningful progress in implementing the relevant Security Council resolutions. Those resolutions demand, inter alia, that Iraq cooperate with the International Committee of the Red Cross and the high-level Coordinator, Ambassador Yuli Vorontsov, who was appointed by the Secretary-General to facilitate the return of those prisoners and hostages. It is clear that the Government of Iraq is insensitive to the humanitarian dimension of this matter. This insensitivity is borne out by its insistence on boycotting the meetings of the ad hoc Tripartite

Commission and its Technical Subcommittee since it walked away from those meetings for unjustifiable political reasons in January 1999. Let me also reiterate our call to Iraq to return our stolen property, in particular the State of Kuwait archives and other official documents.

Over the past few years, the world economic scene has undergone remarkable changes. We have seen the emergence of several new economic phenomena created by the revolution in information technology and the immense scientific progress in communications and trade. These changes and phenomena have made it imperative for many countries, especially the developing nations, to introduce drastic changes to their economic plans and structures in an attempt to benefit from the globalized economy with a view to ensuring development and progress for their societies. Despite the promise of substantial benefits as a result of policies to liberalize world trade and eliminate customs barriers, we still have to make a concerted effort in order to make the globalization process a positive force that benefits all the peoples of the world. This will require the drawing up of regional and international guidelines and standards that protect the nascent economies of the developing nations from economic turbulence and crises that might otherwise have an adverse impact on the living conditions of their peoples.

In the meantime, the developed countries and the international financial institutions should double their financial aid to the developing countries in order to enable them to strengthen the underpinnings of their economic structures. In the long term, this will help to establish more balanced economic relations built on mutual benefit and common interest. With that in mind, Kuwait is pursuing a steadfast policy of support for developmental projects in many developing countries. Most recently, Kuwait has contributed $1 million to the fund established by the Secretary-General to combat the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

On a parallel track, Kuwait is contributing to the funding of many developmental programmes and projects in the developing countries through international and regional financial institutions, as well as through many public Kuwaiti charitable organizations. This philanthropy is motivated by a sense of common social responsibility and social interdependence — values that are embedded in the traditions of our Islamic faith.

Let me close by saying that we look forward to participating actively in the forthcoming celebrations of the Year of Dialogue among Civilizations. Hopefully, this will turn out to be another event that underscores our determination to promote and consolidate the concepts of civilized tolerance and understanding among our nations and peoples, who all yearn to live free of self-inflicted conflicts and to enjoy a prosperous life in which good and virtuous human tendencies prevail as a basis for international relations.

The Acting President *(spoke in Arabic)*: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Acting Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the State of Kuwait for the statement he has just made.

Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Acting Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the State of Kuwait, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by The Honourable Tuilaepa Malielegaoi, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Independent State of Samoa

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Independent State of Samoa.

The Honourable Tuilaepa Malielegaoi, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Independent State of Samoa, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency The Honourable Tuilaepa Malielegaoi, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Independent State of Samoa, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

I apologize to the Prime Minister for the change in the order of speakers.

Mr. Malielegaoi (Samoa): Samoa is very pleased that we are meeting under the presidency of Mr. Han. On behalf of my Government, I extend warm congratulations to the President of the General Assembly and express to him our full confidence and cooperation.

Allow me also a moment to pay tribute to his predecessor, President Harri Holkeri, for his

outstanding service and leadership during the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly, and for the significant achievements of that session.

We are delighted with the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to our Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, and to our Organization. I want, in particular, to congratulate the Secretary-General and to wish him every success in his new term of office. His personal qualities and extraordinary leadership give shape to the modern face of the United Nations in ways that give force and credibility to the Organization and its performance.

The terrorist attacks of 11 September marked a turning point in the history of our era. These terrible events give special significance to this session of the Assembly. We need to send out from this house an unambiguous message.

The clear view of my Government is that there is no room for moral equivocation. The deliberate taking of innocent civilian life, regardless of cause or grievance, is without justification in law and is morally unacceptable. My Government has declared its strong condemnation of the attacks in New York, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania, and I want today to underscore that condemnation in unequivocal terms.

On behalf of my country and its citizens, I want to renew to the Government and the people of the United States our profound feelings of sorrow and sympathy and our committed solidarity and support. I also want to say that the leadership, magnificent example and courage shown by the United States demonstrate beyond doubt the extraordinary strengths of that great democracy and the indomitable spirit of its people.

This was a most monstrous crime, evil in premeditation and merciless in execution. Thousands of innocent lives were taken, thousands of people murdered without warning. To the families and friends of the victims — which included citizens of many other countries represented in this Hall — we extend our warm and heartfelt condolences.

Terrorism is an offence against the core values of the United Nations. It is a direct and most serious threat to democracy, to the free exercise of human rights and to economic and social development. It has no respect for social order, human life and property.

This has never been clearer than in the aftermath of these terrible attacks against the United States. Furthermore, these horrific events not only have served to highlight the need for a concerted and effective international response but have also drawn attention to the inadequacy of the traditional forms of judicial and law enforcement in combating it.

There cannot be any question as to the need for an effective response from the international community. Indeed, the Security Council's unanimous and momentous resolution 1373 (2001), together with resolution 1368 (2001), gives the clearest signal of the international community's determination to take concrete action against the financing, training and movement of terrorists and the need for all States to cooperate in any campaign against them. We believe they provide the necessary basis for securing the broadest possible international support and cooperation for the global campaign against terrorism, in particular through the work of the Counter-Terrorism Committee.

I am pleased to announce that as part of its own response in this collective effort, Samoa is taking steps to adhere to additional United Nations conventions on international terrorism.

We believe, however, that we need to bear in mind that fighting terrorism cannot be separated from the task of preventing organized crime and the spread of small arms and other weapons, and of containing and ending conflict. We also need to ensure that the conditions of poverty and despair, which breed ignorance, hatred, violence and extremism, are properly and effectively addressed.

We need, above all, to remain resolute in upholding the rule of law and the principles that underpin the rule of law. The clear affirmation of these principles and of the norms of humanitarian and international law will help deny to the perpetrators of these crimes whatever they seek to gain from violence.

We consider it essential to renew efforts to promote the rapid entry into force of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. A functioning international criminal court for the prosecution of terrorist acts amounting to crimes against humanity — as we consider the attacks on the United States to be — would provide a vital component in the international armoury against terrorism.

This fifty-sixth session of the Assembly is the first to follow last year's Millennium Summit. It will be the ideal occasion to take up the critical issues and strategies for implementing the Millennium Declaration. May I say in this connection that we warmly welcome and find most useful the road map report of the Secretary-General, setting out in some detail how the Summit commitments could be fulfilled.

We note that most of the targets set by the Millennium Declaration are not really new. They are the determined results of global conferences of the 1990s or are derived from the body of international norms and laws that have been codified over the past 50 years. It follows that the plans of action needed for reaching the targets have, for the most part, already been developed and formally adopted by Member States.

What is needed, therefore, is not more technical or feasibility studies. Rather, as the Secretary-General's report points out, States need to demonstrate the political will to carry out commitments already made and to implement strategies already worked out. In other words, as we move from an era of commitment to an era of implementation, the international community must mobilize the will and the resources needed to fulfil the promises made.

Samoa was honoured recently to host a Pacific regional meeting as part of the preparatory work for the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg next September. It is important to seek further progress in these preparations, especially in the completion of national assessment reports. We believe the Summit will be a unique opportunity to re-establish international commitment to sustainable development. Our own view is that there is a need to accelerate the comprehensive and targeted implementation of Agenda 21. Efforts to this end should aim to minimize and remove obstacles that impede the implementation of the Rio commitments, especially in capacity-building needs and in the provision of adequate financial and technological support.

We place particular importance on the International Conference on Financing for Development. The agenda of the Conference allows for a full range of substantive issues to be addressed. It would be important to forge broad-based consensus on all these issues, and even more so on the reform of the international financial and trade architecture in a way that would be supportive of the long-term development of developing countries. There should be enhanced opportunities for the representation and participation of developing countries, including small island States, in the major decision-making institutions on global financing, monetary and trade issues.

It is impossible today to visualize progress and development without access to modern information systems. The remarkable growth of information and communication technologies (ICT) is opening up boundless new possibilities for accelerated economic and social development. But the ability to translate the full potential of ICT differs from country to country. I know my country needs to develop its own capacity to do so. Yet we know that, for a developing country like my own, there is no real option but to take full advantage of the digital revolution. We will therefore be supporting every global effort to call attention to the need for bridging the digital divide.

The turn of the millennium has brought new challenges, and with it changes to the character and complexity of the United Nations role in maintaining international peace and security. Samoa is proud to have been able to contribute to the civilian police operations in East Timor. From this experience it is clear to us that if the United Nations is to do its job of maintaining international peace and security, it needs to be given the necessary tools and resources.

We have learned a great deal from the report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations, and we know that the United Nations needs to improve its capacity to respond to conflicts more effectively. And we need to move forward with the peacekeeping reform process.

The recognition implicit in the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to the United Nations means that more than ever, we need to modernize and strengthen our Organization. We fully support the current efforts to review and revitalize the working methods of the General Assembly.

We commend most highly the work of the General Assembly's Open-ended Working Group on reform of the Security Council and its Bureau. Difficult and critical issues remain. But we need to maintain the political momentum provided in the Millennium Summit for comprehensive reform of the Security Council. Membership of the Council, both permanent and non-permanent, needs to be enlarged to reflect the

realities of the present time and to enhance its role and effectiveness.

Finally, let me refer to the twenty-second special session of the General Assembly, in 1999, that reviewed the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. Since that time, a number of global events, such as the tenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries have recalled the fragility of small island States in the globalizing economy. We, of course, are grateful for this acknowledgement. However, I believe I reflect the aspiration of all small island States in saying that we need to do much more in terms of concrete actions - actions that will only be meaningful if we are assured of the committed support of the whole international community.

Overcoming the well-recognized vulnerability of small island States like my own, and the exposure of island communities to the effects of global climate change, natural disasters, environmental damage and global economic shocks will be an essential element of sustainable development in all small island regions.

May I say, in this connection, that Samoa very much welcomes the successful conclusion yesterday in Marrakech of the seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The completion of the operational details of the Kyoto Protocol will, we hope, open the way to widespread ratification by Governments and the Protocol' s early entry into force, perhaps by the time of the Johannesburg World Summit next year.

The struggle against climate change is not just an environmental issue. It is also a matter of fundamental development. It is so because the adverse impact of climate change endangers economic and social progress. This is most certainly the case for small island States, which are widely acknowledged to be among the most vulnerable and the least able to adapt. The world community's response to climate change therefore requires significant, long-term changes in economic and social behaviour. The United Nations has an urgent and vital responsibility in this task as well.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Independent State of Samoa for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Malialegaoi, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Samoa, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Serene Highness Crown Prince Albert, Crown Prince of the Principality of Monaco

Crown Prince Albert, Crown Prince of the Principality of Monaco, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Serene Highness Crown Prince Albert, Crown Prince of the Principality of Monaco, and invite him to address the General Assembly.

Crown Prince Albert (Principality of Monaco) (*spoke in French*): In taking the floor here at the Headquarters of our Organization — recipient of the 2001 Nobel Peace Prize — meeting in New York, which has been so tragically attacked, I wish naturally, at the outset, to renew to the delegation of the United States and the great country it represents, our friend, and the American people the expression of heartfelt sympathy of the Principality of Monaco. Confronted with insane actions that prompt horror and indignation, we find ourselves in natural solidarity in this ordeal, as well as in the task that now faces the international community of making decisions and working so that our States and societies will be spared other appalling violent acts in the future.

I would like once again to extend to you, Mr. President, and to all the members of the Bureau our sincere congratulations on your election to the presidency of this session of the General Assembly. I am confident that, under your great leadership, our work will be carried out in a way that will best meet the expectations of the international community. I also wish to assure you of the spirit of cooperation of the delegation of Monaco.

I also wish to hail the brilliant re-election of the Secretary-General, a clear sign of the confidence that we have in his intelligence and humanity, which are linked to his profound knowledge of the circumstances in which he must discharge his noble mission regarding world affairs, of which our Organization is seized. We also wish to assure him of the great satisfaction that the Principality of Monaco, my country, shares at the

renewal of his mandate and of our full support, which we will continue to offer him.

We are very gratified that the 2001 Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to him jointly with our Organization, a fully deserved and justified reward that should motivate us — the States Members of the United Nations — to work together even more with him to champion peace and to fight the many seeds of conflict that threaten our world, terrorism, human rights violations, underdevelopment and pandemics such as AIDS.

The tragic circumstances in which this session of the General Assembly is taking place make it our duty to contribute with even greater determination than in the past to the struggle against terrorism. Owing to their enormity and to the defiance that is behind them, its manifestations can, as we have seen, pose a grave threat to international peace and security. The Principality of Monaco firmly supports everything the Organization has adopted and implemented to stifle this scourge, which can be so devastating to the principles we all hold. The fact that what a lawyer would call "edged weapons" were enough to bring down one of the most modern and sophisticated symbols of human creativity reminds us of the fragility of our societies, which densely populated urban centres and interdependence in all vital areas make even more vulnerable in the light of the boundless contempt of some for human life and human dignity.

Among the most important of the commitments our States have undertaken on behalf of their peoples by signing the Charter of the United Nations are the obligations to maintain international peace and security, to develop friendly relations among nations and to encourage respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms: commitments that a handful of terrorists, in their blind facelessness, rejected with appalling arrogance and savage brutality.

Two months to the day have elapsed since that tragic event. Although emotions have by no means subsided, the healing effects of time are beginning to give us a little of the sense of distance that is so necessary for more objective consideration of this astonishing political challenge and this unacceptable human tragedy.

The General Assembly very quickly undertook such consideration through its debate in early October on measures to eliminate international terrorism. For its part, the Security Council had already correctly marked out the initial path and the principal guidelines. And the Secretary-General has repeatedly called on Member States to remain more united than ever, and it appears that his words have been heeded.

Although the nature of terrorism did not change on 11 September, its scale did. The General Assembly decided to respond with a complete cohesiveness that has been rare in its history. By adopting its resolution 1373 (2001), the Security Council did not shrink from drawing on the full scope and range of its powers under Chapter VII of the Charter; it took note of the existence of a threat to peace and an act of aggression and thus decided on the exceptional measures that the Principality of Monaco is proud to be implementing.

For us, following up on these initiatives with the necessary effectiveness means not only implementing the resolutions that reflect our common determination and our commitment to fight terrorism and formulating additional agreements and conventions, but also, first and foremost, bringing our expertise to the implementation of instruments that have already been concluded and to which we have acceded or intend to accede. Improving the Organization's action in the legal sphere is both indispensable and of top priority; we know this, as does the Government of the Principality. Therefore, yesterday I signed and deposited, on behalf of my father, the sovereign Prince, the instruments of ratification of the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism. The Principality of Monaco considers it essential that there be coordinated worldwide action against all forms of financing of terrorism, in order to deprive extremist movements of the resources that enable them to do such serious harm to the international community and to its deep-seated aspirations to peace and security. Afghanistan, much of whose territory is occupied and a portion of whose people are today enslaved, is the most telling example of this.

The visionary Millennium Declaration and the outcomes of recent world conferences — such as the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the Durban World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance — also merit special attention. Without question, these latter can contribute greatly to improving, respectively, international security and

understanding among peoples. On the fight against racism, the subject of the Durban World Conference, I would note that the Government of the Princ pality of Monaco has decided to recognize the competence of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, established under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, to receive and process communications from individuals or groups of persons charging violations of a right set out in that instrument, to which Monaco is a party.

International economic and financial cooperation, with its inevitable human and social consequences, must also be included in the reflection prompted by these events, which is more necessary than ever in the light of the issues facing us today. Because it is in part the result of the new interdependence, the globalization of trade in products, manufactured goods and services — disparaged by some and hailed by others — must also be a part of our urgent intellectual and practical endeavours, so that beyond the constraints and imperatives that guide it, human beings can regain their just, legitimate role. Above all, the economy must serve today's men and women, with respect for their legitimate aspirations, their vital needs and the age-old richness of their diversity.

Regional and subregional cooperation is particularly conducive to such a goal. My country is convinced of that; in the Mediterranean area we are engaged in the trade, culture and technological spheres, and are working to promote sustainable development and environmental protection. Nor should we neglect activities which by their nature tend to bring together men and women from different backgrounds, such as artistic and cultural events, academic meetings and sporting competitions. In the Assembly's debate on the agenda item entitled "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal", the delegation of Monaco will recall the irreplaceable role in that connection of physical education and sport, as well as of the Olympic games.

Another way to bring human communities together is the multilingualism for which the United Nations must be a model. That key item is on the Assembly's agenda this year. The Principality of Monaco will state its views on that subject and will stress the remarkable and unquestionable advantages of multilingualism for genuine understanding and mutual respect among peoples.

Alongside modern science and technology, which are moving forward and rapidly becoming universal, thus fostering exchanges among peoples, more traditional forms of communication also have an important role to play. In our view, teaching and information, more than ever before, have a fundamental role in spreading ideas of peace and understanding among men and women in our troubled times. Here, the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization has given us excellent regulatory texts, working documents and programmes that we must revitalize with increased energy in order to provide greater hope to young people, who are often frustrated by the harshness of daily life.

We also, and very often, give thought to the seas and the oceans, which made such a contribution in ancient times to meetings of civilizations and to the spread of knowledge, thus enriching art and culture while developing trade and solidarity. A few days from now, the delegation of Monaco will state its views during the consideration of the agenda item on oceans and the law of the sea. My country has always been devoted to better scientific knowledge and careful protection of the marine environment, an indispensable source for the harmonious flourishing of life.

Thus the Principality of Monaco, with other Member States, requests the Assembly to grant observer status to the International Hydrographic Organization, for which it is the headquarters, in order to allow that institution to strengthen its cooperation with Governments and to advance international initiatives and exchanges in marine cartography — initiatives and exchanges designed to spread knowledge of seabeds and coastal zones, as well as to make navigation easier and safer.

Respect for the decisions and resolutions taken by our forums and the strengthening of our regulatory actions, as well as the implementation of the declarations and plans of action of our recent global conferences, are significant commitments to which the authorities of the Government of the Principality of Monaco are dedicated. In our difficult times, they represent shared values which prompt us to act together in the interest of our international community, which is also in the interest of each of our countries.

To close on an optimistic note, allow me to express the hope — a hope that I believe is shared by

many here — that the wisdom of nations united more than ever before will be able to triumph rapidly over the evil represented by terrorism in its new global and universal form, while extirpating from the world the stubborn roots that fuel it.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Crown Prince of the Principality of Monaco for the statement he has just made.

Crown Prince Albert, Crown Prince of the Principality of Monaco, was escorted from the rostrum.

The President: Before we continue to hear statements by representatives, I wish to draw the attention of the Assembly to the security arrangements for this general debate, and request the Assembly's forbearance and cooperation in that regard. These security arrangements are necessitated by the presence of high-ranking participants, including more than 40 heads of State and Government, at a particularly tense period in our host city, in the aftermath of the 11 September terrorist attacks. The law enforcement authorities here have been extremely helpful and efficient in this regard, and on behalf of the General Assembly, I would like to thank them for their assistance. I believe it is time for all of us to understand that increased security is for the protection of us all, and therefore to render our cooperation in that spirit.

I now call on His Excellency Mr. Kiichi Miyazawa, Member of Parliament and former Prime Minister of Japan.

Mr. Miyazawa (Japan): I would like to congratulate Mr. Han Seung-soo, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Republic of Korea, on his assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session, and to pay high tribute to him for the efficient manner in which he has been guiding this session under unprecedented circumstances. Japan is determined to continue to extend its full support to the President.

I would also like on this occasion to extend my sincere congratulations to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, and to the United Nations on being named the recipients of the Nobel Peace Prize this year. I believe it is indeed a reflection of the international community's appreciation for the efforts of the United Nations, under the leadership of Secretary-General Annan, for world peace and prosperity. The challenges facing the international community, however, are becoming increasingly diverse and difficult, and Japan will cooperate fully with the activities of the United Nations in responding to these situations.

I deeply mourn the deaths of the victims of the series of heinous terrorist attacks against the United States on 11 September, who have left behind loving families and friends in the United States and in many other countries. I extend my sincere condolences to the bereaved families and to all the people and the Government of the United States.

It is no exaggeration to say that the terrorist attacks are threats against all humankind and are challenges to democracy and freedom throughout the world. The international community must establish a world-wide circle of cooperation for the elimination of terrorism. In this context, I am encouraged that, in response to the recent attacks, the international community is taking prompt actions at the United Nations and in many other international and regional organizations and forums to prevent and eliminate terrorism. Considering the response to terrorism to be its own responsibility, Japan is determined to make the utmost efforts to prevent and eliminate such acts.

Japan has made it clear that the terrorist attacks on the United States must not be linked to Islamic doctrine. It is extremely important that the international community, transcending religious and ethnic differences, take unified actions to eliminate terrorism.

There are many things which the United Nations has to do in order to eliminate terrorism. It is imperative that we faithfully and immediately implement Security Council resolutions 1368 (2001) and 1373 (2001). Japan is actively contributing to the work of the Security Council in implementing resolution 1373 (2001). It is also important that all Member States accede to and fully observe the 12 international conventions relating to terrorism and accelerate the work toward the adoption of a comprehensive convention on international terrorism and an international convention for the suppression of acts of nuclear terrorism.

Moreover, certain biological weapons, such as anthrax, can be produced with more limited funds and less advanced technologies than nuclear and chemical weapons. It is important to strengthen the Biological

Weapons Convention in order to effectively prevent the production of such weapons.

Japan is itself making various efforts to eliminate terrorism. First, with regard to treaties, there are two treaties concerning terrorism which Japan has either not yet signed or not yet ratified. The International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings has recently been approved by the Diet, and Japan will immediately begin the ratification process. Japan signed the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism on 30 October and would like to ratify it as soon as possible.

In addition, Japan is ready to cooperate with developing countries in the fields of controlling the financing of terrorism, immigration control, aviation and maritime safety, measures against terrorism through biological and chemical weapons, and so forth.

Moreover, Japan will take more active measures against terrorism by enacting a new law to support the operations of other countries that are trying to eliminate the threat posed by the recent terrorist attacks and to extend assistance to affected people.

In view of the importance of ensuring the stability of Afghanistan's neighbours, Japan is extending emergency economic assistance, which includes assistance to Afghan refugees, Pakistan and other neighbouring countries. Japan also decided to provide up to $120 million for Afghan refugee assistance efforts undertaken by United Nations agencies and other humanitarian organizations.

With winter approaching, there is an urgent humanitarian need for the international community to deliver food and other vital goods to the people in Afghanistan. I would like to take this opportunity to call upon the international community to join forces in support of the humanitarian activities of United Nations organizations.

As we look ahead to the future, the achievement of peace and stability in Afghanistan is extremely important not only to eliminate a hotbed of global terrorism but also to lay the foundation for the long-term stability and development of the country and the neighbouring region. Based on this recognition, it is necessary for the international community to tackle this issue from a long-term and broad perspective.

Towards that end, it goes without saying that, first of all, a Government must be established that has the broad support of the Afghan people, represents every ethnic group, adheres to international law and establishes friendly relations with the international community, including with neighbouring countries. However, the realities in Afghanistan do not offer a clear perspective and thus entail many unpredictable elements. Japan fully supports the activities of Secretary-General Annan and his Special Representative for Afghanistan, Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, to promote political stability in Afghanistan and will actively cooperate with them.

Japan intends to play an active role both in the peace process and in the reconstruction of Afghanistan. We have been calling for holding a conference for peace and reconstruction in Afghanistan since 1996, and I would like on this occasion to reaffirm that Japan is ready to hold such a conference to contribute to that country's peace and reconstruction at as early a time as possible, in cooperation with relevant countries and organizations.

The United Nations has serious responsibilities for addressing relating to terrorism. Japan will spare no effort in order that this session of the General Assembly can be as fruitful as possible for this purpose.

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Jan Petersen, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Norway.

Mr. Petersen (Norway): First, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly.

For more than half a century, the United Nations has helped to settle conflicts and restore peace. We must reinforce these efforts and focus our work.

For more than half a century, the United Nations has worked to promote human rights and economic and social development. We must continue to invest in human dignity.

For more than half a century, the United Nations has given millions of people hope for a better future. Such hope has never been more important than it is today.

The Nobel Peace Prize could not have been awarded to more deserving candidates than Secretary-General Kofi Annan and the United Nations. Let me once again extend my heartfelt congratulations.

The terrorist attacks on 11 September were not only directed at innocent people. They were directed at the very values on which the United Nations is based.

We stand united in our condemnation of these attacks, in our call for international cooperation to prevent and eradicate terrorism and to bring the guilty to justice. We will fight terrorism by all appropriate means: political, diplomatic, legal, financial and military.

Norway pledges its full support to the broad global coalition against terrorism. We are part of the Atlantic Alliance. We fully support the United States in defending itself against international terrorism. We are implementing the provisions of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) by taking concrete steps to dry up the financial resources of terrorist networks.

The Taliban regime has refused to adhere to mandatory Security Council decisions. It is harbouring and supporting terrorists, in blunt contravention of Council resolutions. The Taliban are refusing to cooperate with the international community in our common efforts to eradicate international terrorism. The use of military force is therefore the only option left.

The military operations in Afghanistan are aimed at the terrorists and those who harbour them. They are not aimed at innocent civilians or at Afghanistan as a country. They are aimed at a group of extremists who are exploiting a world religion for their own evil purposes.

Afghanistan has suffered misrule and war for decades. While the immediate task is to end terrorism and provide humanitarian support to those in need, we must work in parallel for a political solution. This is primarily the responsibility of the Afghan people themselves, but the international community must assist. The United Nations must have a leading role. Planning and preparations must start now. We strongly support the efforts of the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Afghanistan, Lakhdar Brahimi, to help lay the foundation for a broad-based and lasting political solution.

We must ensure that the Afghans receive humanitarian assistance both inside Afghanistan and in neighbouring countries. But while seeking to meet immediate needs, we must also focus on the longer-term assistance that will be necessary to rebuild this war-torn society. We must improve respect for human rights and help the Afghan people, in particular women, who have suffered so terribly under Taliban rule. These are issues that Norway will focus on during its chairmanship of the Afghanistan Support Group next year. Only through coordinated efforts can we contribute to security and development in Afghanistan.

A year ago, peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians appeared to be at hand. Today, the hope for peace and security has given way to disillusion, despair and the murder of civilians.

We are convinced that the only way out of the current stalemate is through the full implementation of the recommendations in the Mitchell report, which have been endorsed by both parties and by the international community.

First of all, there must be an immediate end to the violence. Terrorism must be stopped. The cycle of violent action and reaction must be broken. Political leaders on both sides must do everything in their power to halt the violence and reduce the tension.

Secondly, confidence-building measures must be implemented simultaneously. Trust must be rebuilt step by step, since without it there can be no real dialogue or negotiation. The Mitchell report lists several steps for restoring trust. Given the high level of hostility and mistrust, the timing and sequence of these steps are crucial. Decisions must be made now.

Thirdly, the parties must find a way back to the negotiating table. A halt to the violence, the resumption of security cooperation and steps to restore trust cannot be sustained for long without serious negotiations to resolve the underlying causes of the conflict.

Norway will continue to support efforts to bring about a peaceful resolution of the conflict. As Chair of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee, we stand ready to work with other donors to help restore the economic and social infrastructure in the Palestinian areas.

The bulk of the conflicts dealt with by the Security Council are found on the African continent. As a member of the Security Council, Norway is determined to do what it can to promote long-term peace and stability in Africa. Most of the conflicts in Africa clearly demonstrate the close links between peace, good governance and development. The root causes of many of these conflicts are poverty and lack

of development, but also violations of human rights and disrespect for basic democratic principles.

Norway stands ready to assist in building a sound foundation for good governance and development in Africa. The developments in Burundi are encouraging, although we recognize that the peace process is still very fragile. The deployment of a multinational security force, on the initiative of South Africa, will, hopefully, improve the situation in Burundi. Norway is ready to support this initiative.

The United Nations is our foremost tool for solving global problems. We should recall that combating terrorism has not removed any of the challenges that were on the global agenda prior to 11 September. Nor has it become less pressing to effectively address these challenges. We must not let the cruelty of terrorists divert attention from the ambitious goals we set for ourselves during the Millennium Summit.

Meeting those objectives must remain right at the top of our agenda, along with our common fight against terrorism. If the United Nations is to be effective in pursuing these tasks, we must all commit ourselves and provide the necessary resources and financial support.

As political leaders, we must show steadfast determination. We will have to make difficult choices and hard decisions, sometimes with painful consequences. But the alternative is even more pain and suffering.

This is true in our common fight against international terrorism. This is true in our struggle to end poverty, eliminate infectious diseases and uphold respect for human rights and the rule of law. This is true if we are to make the United Nations our primary tool for safeguarding our common security.

The President: I call on His Excellency Mr. Dah Ould Abdi, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Mauritania.

Mr. Ould Abdi (Mauritania) (*spoke in Arabic*): I am delighted to be able to congratulate you, Sir, on behalf of the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, on your election to the presidency of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. We are certain that your experience and wisdom will indeed guarantee success at this session.

I also avail myself of this opportunity to express my gratitude to your predecessor, Mr. Harri Holkeri, for his skilful and distinguished guidance of the work of the past session. This is also an opportunity for me to extend our heartfelt congratulations to the Secretary-General and the entire United Nations staff on their tireless efforts to achieve the noble objectives of our Organization. Those efforts have quite rightly been recognized by the Nobel Academy, which decided to award the 2001 Nobel Peace Prize jointly to the Secretary-General and the United Nations. This distinction reflects the most striking recognition of the efforts undertaken by our Organization to strengthen international peace and security. It also constituted recognition of the personal merits and contributions of the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan. Moreover, the re-election of the Secretary-General to a second term reflected the satisfaction of the international community.

This session is taking place in a climate of sadness in the aftermath of the criminal attacks on New York and on Washington, D.C., with their heavy toll of thousands of innocent lives. The moment they were perpetrated, Mauritania voiced its absolute condemnation of those terrorist acts. My country reaffirms its condolences to the people and the Government of the United States. These tragic events have cast light on a new situation: terrorism is no longer a marginal phenomenon but is rather a key problem that knows no boundaries and that can be combated only by means of a global strategy. Mauritania continues to be an active participant in all regional and international activities aimed at a concerted and comprehensive fight against that phenomenon. In that context, we reaffirm our unreserved support for all relevant resolutions, along with our determination, specifically, to implement Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) of 28 September.

It is obvious that the role and international legitimacy of the United Nations in bringing about international peace, security and stability must be enhanced. No one must suggest that fighting terrorism is a campaign by one civilization against another, or the supposed supremacy of one civilization over any other. To the contrary, we must act together to show that the endeavour to eliminate terrorism marks a new phase in humankind's march forward, building on the heritage of all civilizations and converging in an

expression of our common aspiration to a secure life and a better future.

In that connection, my country notes with satisfaction the sustained efforts and the success of repeated appeals to bring peace to the Middle East so that the peoples of that region can live in peace, security and prosperity. We hope that the peace process will be resumed in accordance with the principles enunciated at the Madrid Conference, in keeping with the principle of land for peace, and in conformity with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978), thus bringing about the complete withdrawal of Israel from all Arab territories occupied in 1967 and the establishment of an independent Palestinian State with its capital in the holy city of Al-Quds Al-Sharif.

We express our hope for a return to stability and concord in the Gulf region, consistent with international legality and with respect for the independence and territorial integrity of Kuwait, as well as with respect for the unity and territorial integrity of Iraq. In that context, we call for the lifting of the embargo that has been imposed for more than 10 years on the fraternal Iraqi people, who have suffered immensely from that embargo.

With respect to Western Sahara, my country supports the efforts of the Secretary-General and of his Personal Envoy, Mr. James A. Baker III, to guarantee stability in the area through a final solution that would enjoy the support of all parties concerned.

Turning to developments in the Lockerbie crisis, we welcome the success of diplomatic initiatives, but at the same time feel that the Security Council should act to lift the embargo imposed on Libya.

We hail everything that has been done to resolve conflicts and wars on the African continent, which have stymied development efforts there. We welcome the recent all-Africa development initiative and the support it has won from our development partners in terms, inter alia, of sources of financing.

It has now been proven that phenomena such as violence and extremism are the outgrowth of poverty and frustration. The international community must therefore go further to demonstrate its solidarity and help achieve social development throughout the world. Developing countries hope for a greater, more reliable spirit of solidarity that is expressed in deeds. They need increased support from the rich countries in the form of greater investment and the opening up of international markets to products from the developing world.

We must recall too that debt continues to be among the major obstacles to progress in the economies of developing countries and a handicap to economic development.

Notwithstanding the scope of the challenges and the unfavourable international situation, the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, under the enlightened leadership of His Excellency President Maaouya Ould Sid' Ahmed Taya, has made major strides towards sustainable development, with a view to improving the standard of living of our people, achieving social advancement and consolidating democracy and the rule of law in a climate of peace, security and stability. Pluralistic democracy has been restored in full with the holding some weeks ago of our fifth municipal elections and our third legislative elections. Among the latest reforms are the introduction of proportional representation, which has made possible the involvement of all parties and which has expanded the voter base and involvement in political life. Observers and opposition parties praised the conduct and the outcome of the elections. The broadest possible participation by the people is the best guarantee of success in the fight against poverty, illiteracy and exclusion. This has strengthened our conviction that true enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms depends on the ability of the people to take part in economic, social and cultural decisions.

A purpose of the Charter of the United Nations is to realize our common goals. Now more than ever, we must make an effort to live up to our Charter commitments in order to bring about a new world based on law and justice, guaranteeing peace, security and solidarity.

Mr. Gama (Portugal) (*spoke in Portuguese; English text furnished by the delegation*): It is with great pleasure that I congratulate Mr. Han Seung-soo on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly. I also pay tribute to the outgoing President, Mr. Harri Holkeri. I renew my respects to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for the notable and courageous way in which he has continued to fulfil his mandate and for the well-deserved award of the Nobel Peace Prize to him and to the United Nations.

My Belgian colleague has already addressed the Assembly on behalf of the 15 States members of the European Union in a statement with which my country aligns itself completely. I would, however, like to reflect upon certain issues on the international agenda.

First, I cannot fail to refer to the tragic terrorist attacks of 11 September against the United States, and in particular against the city of New York and innocent citizens of many nationalities. I reiterate our deep sorrow and reaffirm our complete solidarity with all those who, like us Portuguese, were victimized by the loss of their compatriots and by the suffering of the bereaved families.

We are dealing with violence without a face, violence that kills indiscriminately and that must be confronted by the international community as a whole, irrespective of the religion we practice, the race to which we belong, the ideology we follow or the civilization into which we were born. It falls to each and every State Member of the United Nations to fight this scourge, whose blind hatred has plunged the world into a state of turmoil not seen since the end of the Second World War. What is most shocking to us is the fact that we are faced with a force that ignores or despises the very concept of the right to life.

We must embark on a concerted effort at all levels to submit to justice those guilty of the crimes committed, with a view to avoiding a repetition of the terrorist acts of September. We believe the United Nations has an irreplaceable role to play as the source of legitimacy for the collective effort of the international community in the fight against this common enemy. It is for other forums to complement these actions, orienting and adjusting them in accordance with the concrete needs of their respective mandates.

In this context, I would like to recall that Portugal has supported without reservation the international fight against terrorism here in the United Nations, in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, in the European Union, in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and in our bilateral relations with the United States and other countries. I would like to assure the Assembly that in its presidency of the OSCE next year, Portugal will attribute particular priority to this matter.

In the light of the current circumstances, I must stress the importance of the entire range of international legislation produced, or awaiting approval, under the aegis of the United Nations in the area of the fight against terrorism: the 12 conventions whose ratification and implementation make them crucial weapons in preventing and fighting against this scourge. Because of its particular significance at this time, I refer specifically to the work of the General Assembly on the draft global convention on terrorism. The great efforts made by the great majority of delegations in search of compromise solutions bear witness to a renewed convergence of wills in pursuit of this common goal. We should take advantage of the current momentum of collective commitment to reach the speedy completion of this essential instrument.

Portugal has already signed 11 of the 12 international conventions against terrorism and is strongly committed to fully implementing their provisions. Yesterday we deposited our instrument of ratification for the International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings, and shortly we will deposit our instrument of ratification for the Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts of Violence at Airports Serving International Civil Aviation. We welcome the adoption of Security Council resolutions 1368 (2001) and 1373 (2001), which are fundamental instruments for the cohesion of the international community in its legitimate fight against terrorism. I would also like to highlight the measures contained therein for the fight against terrorist financing — an absolutely crucial area.

As I have already stated, Portugal has supported from the beginning the international campaign under way in Afghanistan, which has been legitimized by the deliberations of the United Nations. Those responsible for the terrorist acts that claimed the lives of thousands of innocent civilians on 11 September must be captured and tried, and their military infrastructure must be eliminated. In our view, the principles guiding the intervention in Afghanistan should include the preservation of territorial integrity and the unity of the country, as well as the establishment of a broadly supported, multi-ethnic and representative Government.

We believe that, from the very start, the Afghan people should be associated with the reconstruction of their country, which has been devastated in recent years by a brutal regime that is not recognized internationally. The international community should

spare no efforts in alleviating the serious humanitarian situation affecting the Afghan people.

Finally, let me reiterate that the Portuguese Government unequivocally supports the efforts undertaken by the United Nations, and in particular by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Lakdar Brahimi, in envisioning a transitional governmental structure and in planning a possible United Nations mission on the ground. In a post-Taliban scenario, the United Nations will be called upon to take a decisive role in the reconstruction of Afghanistan as well as in the establishment of peaceful relations between Afghanistan and its neighbours.

The United Nations plays an indispensable role in the prevention of conflicts, the maintenance of international peace and security and the reconstruction of territories devastated by war. Numerous conflicts are awaiting resolution and constitute a considerable challenge to the international community's capacity to guarantee their peaceful and definitive settlement.

The situation in the Middle East, specifically in Palestine, is the most worrisome, placing even international security at risk. The international community can spare no efforts to ensure that Israel and the Palestinians return to the path of dialogue. Only there will a solution be found that is just, both for the Palestinian people — who have fought for decades for the recognition of their homeland, an inalienable and undeniable right, and for dignified living conditions within a sovereign and responsible Palestinian State — and for Israel, which has an equal right to live in security in the region and at peace with its neighbours.

As another example of international conflicts that drag on, apparently with no definitive resolution in sight, my country profoundly regrets the continuation of the armed conflict in Angola and its severe humanitarian consequences. Portugal reaffirms its commitment to and support for the search for a political solution to this problem, in line with the provisions of the Acordos de Paz, the Lusaka Protocol and the relevant resolutions of the Security Council. It is essential that the commitments undertaken with regard to the international community, and principally with regard to the Angolan people, be respected. Portugal encourages the Angolan Government to redouble its efforts to achieve national reconciliation. We also encourage the introduction of political and economic reforms in Angola, with a view to reinforcing in particular the legitimacy of its representative and pluralistic institutions and the strengthening of the credibility of its monetary and financial structures.

We also appeal for a return to political means on the part of those — such as the sector that inspires the more radical line of UNITA — that have resorted to methods, namely violence against civilians, that have placed them outside the international community. In fact, the absence of constructive proposals — including with regard to a ceasefire or the cessation of offensive operations — does not contribute to the implementation of possible platforms for dialogue, which the current situation demands.

We praise the important and increasing contribution made by Angolan society, particularly its churches, to peace and reconciliation. We believe that a United Nations presence in Angola continues to be essential and should be encouraged.

In that vein, I would like to actively encourage the Secretary-General to intensify all possible efforts to relaunch the peace process in Angola with a view to the adequate implementation of the Lusaka Protocol, so that that great country can finally guarantee tranquillity to its citizens and recover its standing and the role to which it is entitled in international life, fully taking part in achieving the objectives of the African renaissance. I am certain that the troika of observer States, as well as the African regional organizations and the European Union, will firmly support the contribution of the Secretary-General to a definitive resolution of the Angolan issue.

When the international community successfully intervenes in a conflict, it should not be turned aside from the consolidation of the solutions reached. The United Nations has the responsibility of maintaining an appropriate level of involvement until the definitive conclusion of the peace process, so as not to put at risk the investments made and expectations created. The United Nations should proceed without hesitation in supporting the creation of viable nations.

I welcome the Security Council's endorsement of this understanding with regard to East Timor, on 31 October. The international community cannot neglect the consolidation of the solutions achieved in East Timor, whose transition to independence is, in fact, a clear case of success for the United Nations and a

special reason for pride for the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries. I take this opportunity to underline that this entire process has been conducted in an exemplary manner by the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor under the leadership of Sergio Vieira de Mello.

The work of the United Nations towards the consolidation of a new and indisputably sovereign, democratic and economically viable State only reinforces the credibility of the Organization at a time in international life when its inspiration and leadership are more needed than ever before to correctly manage the great global challenges of the twenty-first century.

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Heinz Möeller Freile, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ecuador.

Mr. Möeller Freile (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I congratulate you, Sir, on your well-deserved election as President of the General Assembly. You are a worthy representative of the Republic of Korea, a country very close to my own through our important ties of friendship and cooperation. I also congratulate your predecessor on the highly efficient and responsible way in which he oversaw the work of the previous session of the Assembly.

The Government of Ecuador received with special satisfaction the news of the award of the 2001 Nobel Peace Prize to the United Nations and the Secretary-General, Kofi Annan. We congratulate the Secretary-General on this well-deserved recognition of his work, which has promoted among Member States the benefits of international association and solidarity.

This session of the Assembly began in an atmosphere of profound distress for all members of the international community. The tragically terrible terrorist attacks in the United States on 11 September are shocking to the human conscience. Those whose perverse and irrational actions took the lives of thousands of innocent people — including many Ecuadorians — committed a grave attack on international peace and security.

From this rostrum, I wish to affirm to the people and the Government of the United States of America the profound condolences and solidarity of the people and the Government of Ecuador following this immense tragedy and to reiterate our strongest condemnation of those criminal acts, which have done violence to all peoples, as well as to universal principles and values.

That is why Ecuador — a peace-loving country convinced of the predominant role of the United Nations as the key institution for decisions affecting the world — praises the action of the General Assembly and the Security Council in response to terrorism, particularly the Council's adoption of resolution 1373 (2001), which contains the guidelines for all Member States to work urgently and in concert to prevent and suppress terrorist acts. Likewise, the international community must conclude negotiations on a comprehensive convention on international terrorism to strengthen the relevant judicial framework with concrete measures to prevent, sanction and combat this scourge. Ecuador is committed at the national, regional and international levels to the fight against terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

In the final years of the twentieth century, great changes took place in the world, which led to new international trends, especially in terms of the process of globalization and threats to international peace and security.

The developing countries, such as my own, began adapting their national structures to deal with the demands of a decidedly competitive environment. However, it must be said that it is obvious that the adjustments and changes those countries have made to their policies and strategies are not enough in themselves to achieve complete results as long as the structural causes of the disparity between the level of development of highly industrialized economies and that of economies in need of capital and advanced technology persist. That disparity continues to widen because of financial difficulties caused by unstable short-term capital flows, persistent external debt and obstacles to truly international trade.

There are signs that current international economic trends are far from providing the equilibrium and justice needed to overcome the unfavourable burdens inherited from the twentieth century. Poverty has grown at alarming rates in all regions. International organized crime has exacerbated violence and insecurity in society. Massive international migration towards developed regions continues to increase. These phenomena, along with many others, result from the lack of real, universal agreements to assist the development of human beings.

The problems that the world faces today respect no national borders. They are threats demanding not unilateral action but responses based on solidarity and concerted action. That interdependence is what enabled the heads of Government and State, at the Millennium Assembly, to agree on making the United Nations, the supreme multilateral forum, a suitable and effective instrument to fight for the development of all peoples of the world; to fight against poverty, ignorance and disease; to fight against injustice, violence, terror and crime; and to fight against the deterioration and destruction of the planet. They also committed themselves to freeing all people from the scourge of war, to eradicating the dangers posed by weapons of mass destruction and to strengthening respect for the rule of law in national and international affairs.

Ecuador, as a country that believes in and practices the peaceful settlement of international disputes, regrets and condemns conflicts between States, as well as those within States caused by civil war, ethnic conflict or other reasons. The Government of Ecuador is concerned by the uncontrolled violence occurring between the peoples of Palestine and Israel, which continues to reap a tragic harvest of death and destruction. We recognize the right of the Palestinian people to a free and independent State, as well as the State of Israel's right to exist within secure and internationally recognized borders. Ecuador reiterates its appeal to both parties to quickly return to peace negotiations.

Last August, Ecuador assumed the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. Its leadership is guided by its profound commitment to the cause of general and complete disarmament under effective international control, which would make it possible to foster peace and confidence among nations.

We are witnessing the intensification of a phenomenon as old as humanity itself, undoubtedly linked to the historical development of civilization. I am referring to the enormous challenge posed by the increase in human migration, especially from the countries of the South towards the North.

While migration has been positive in that it has contributed to fruitful exchange between various peoples and has deepened dialogue processes and mutual enrichment between diverse cultures, in most cases the reason for it stems from the individual's desire to seek better living conditions and broader economic prospects. We cannot think of human history without the constant and ever present phenomenon of migration, and the current era is no exception. In the present age of the globalization of markets and the possibility of a new round of multilateral trade negotiations in the World Trade Organization (WTO), the liberalization of the administration of services through the free movement of persons must be emphasized.

Today many developing countries of the world, afflicted by the serious consequences of economic crisis and the prevalence of structural failures that are difficult to overcome, have become net producers of migrants, men and women who feel compelled to seek broader horizons legally. Ecuador is one of those countries because of the most serious economic crisis of its recorded history, exacerbated by external factors that changed the momentum of the national development process. Internal and external factors merged in recent years, deepening this crisis, which we are overcoming in a positive way at enormous sacrifice.

While migration tends to be a positive phenomenon in terms of historic objectives, the consequences for individuals are painful and stir our conscience. Because of that, my country has taken a series of actions to protect the rights of migrants and their families. With the support of the International Organization for Migration, we have held several meetings in which the State and civil society have participated. They have enabled us, on the one hand, to have direct testimony about the serious problems of this group of individuals who have left their countries voluntarily to find better opportunities and, on the other hand, to obtain concrete commitments aimed at protecting and defending human rights. I wish to underline the transnational nature of the migration problem, which requires active cooperation between countries of origin and countries receiving immigrants, as well as international bodies. In this context, I am happy to point out that Ecuador and Spain signed an agreement aimed at regulating migration, which undoubtedly has been beneficial for migrant citizens and signatory countries.

Ecuador appeals to all Governments and sectors of civil society, but particularly to those of the developed world — receivers of migrant workers - to redouble their efforts aimed at protecting the rights of this vulnerable sector of society in a non-

discriminatory way, conscious of all the positive and fruitful aspects that the migration phenomenon brings to the general development of countries, as demonstrated by European history of recent centuries and the integration of the Americas into the West.

If the twentieth century was the stage for some of the greatest humanitarian tragedies recorded by history, it is true that in that period we also witnessed the birth of a new global awareness of the urgency to protect and promote human rights and to preserve man's home, land and environment.

My country has fully assumed this global challenge. We are signatories to the main instruments on this important item at both the international and the hemispheric level, and we have national tools that enable us to achieve such objectives. The National Plan on Human Rights, adopted as a State policy in June 1998 by civil society and the State, is perhaps the most innovative and visionary instrument that has been developed in our country. We hope that it will enable us to promote a real culture of tolerance and respect between the ethnic, social and cultural groups of our society. With this plan, Ecuador also complied with the mandate of the 1993 Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action.

In keeping with all the above-mentioned points, Ecuador places importance on one of the mandates of the Carabobo Act, signed in July 2001 by the Presidents of the Andean Community of Nations, and has begun work on a draft Andean Charter of Human Rights, aimed at consolidating the ideas of respect for and the promotion of the fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual in the specific areas of culture and ethnic plurality characteristic of the Andean subregion. Ecuador was a pioneer in this important matter when, in 1980, within the subregional framework, it spurred on the adoption of the Riobamba Charter, which includes among its postulates the protection of human rights as an international obligation of all States and the condition that legitimate joint action carried out in protecting such rights must not violate the principle of non-intervention. Within this same context, Ecuador signed the Rome Statute of the International Court of Justice of July 1998, and it is taking measures for its prompt ratification.

Turning to the WTO and the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), there is no doubt that one of the most important items on the foreign policy agenda of States is international economic relations. Ecuador wishes to express some views on this, at the moment when the Fourth WTO Ministerial Conference is taking place in Qatar.

Ecuador deems it fundamental to pursue the process of opening up trade, reducing tariffs and eliminating unnecessary trade barriers. However, my country also shares the doubts of some developing countries about the advantages of launching a new round of multilateral trade negotiations when the commitments of the Uruguay Round have not yet been fully implemented, particularly those relating to the reduction and the elimination of agricultural subsidies and to agreement on special and differential treatment provisions in favour of developing countries. These are priority items of interest for Ecuador, as is the expansion of openness in agricultural trade.

We emphasize the necessary reform required by the WTO Dispute Settlement Understanding to strengthen the implementation regime of the decisions of the relevant ad hoc groups and the appeals body. For example, Ecuador was never able to obtain the compensation to which it was entitled, in spite of having won the banana dispute in all the proceedings before the WTO Dispute Settlement Body and an arbitration award of $201.4 million annually, the amount of the damages caused to my country by an illegal import, sales and distribution scheme of that product in Europe.

Given our own experience in this dispute, we believe that compensation must be binding, if we are really speaking about free markets in the full sense of the word, and that retaliatory measures in the same sector or in cross-sectors is not sufficient to repair the damages caused, particularly to the economies of developing countries. It would also be worth evaluating other types of compensation, such as increasing technical cooperation, as a European country is proposing at this time with respect to Ecuador.

Progress in trade negotiations and the fulfilment of commitments already made will make it possible for us to have an international economic and financial climate conducive to investment and to growth of the world economy, which will make a positive contribution to social and human development. These same proposals give us hope in the negotiations of the FTAA — the Trade Negotiations Committee of which Ecuador is currently president. Our efforts take into

account the various positions of countries, as well as their different levels of development and sizes of their economies, since we must seek consensus on decisions in a way that makes all the parties involved feel that their interests are guaranteed. For least developed countries, the establishment of a hemisphere-wide free-trade zone poses a challenge and at the same time offers an exceptional opportunity to be fully integrated into world economy in this new phase.

I turn next to the question of external debt and development financing. The enormous limitations faced by heavily indebted developing countries such as Ecuador, resulting from disproportionately large external-debt servicing costs and from persistent obstacles to marketing our exports, work against national efforts to engender economic stability and sustainable development. Ecuador's total external debt now stands at about 64 per cent of our gross domestic product and nearly 40 per cent of our national budget; this has a negative impact on the financing of social development projects.

External debt is mortgaging the economic present and future of developing countries; it has extremely adverse effects because it devours vast resources that would otherwise be used in the fight against poverty, in promoting public health and education, and in meeting many other urgent social needs. The situation thus has an increasing negative effect on market-oriented national policies and the political and democratic stability of many countries. It is therefore time for the international community to adopt effective, fair, lasting, development-oriented measures so as to make progress in easing this serious problem — a problem that highly indebted medium-income countries too are facing.

Ecuador attaches the greatest importance to the International Conference on Financing for Development to be held next March at Monterrey. It will be a good opportunity to define, from the financing perspective, a new kind of world cooperation that will effectively support development, especially the development of the countries of the South.

I am pleased to announce the conclusion and signature of an agreement between the World Meteorological Organization and the Government of Ecuador on the establishment at Guayaquil of an international centre for research on El Niño. I urgently appeal to the United Nations and its specialized agencies, to the international community and to international and regional financial institutions for resolute cooperation to ensure that the centre begins its work promptly.

Finally, as an Ecuadorian, I wish to address the question of the Colombian conflict. I wish to say that my country is following closely the internal political conflict in Colombia and the unfolding of a peace process in that country. In conformity with our policy of promoting dialogue and negotiation as the best way to overcome problems, we have frequently stated our unreserved political support for the Colombian Government's efforts to reach a negotiated peace with armed irregular groups operating in its country. Ecuador applauds the peace initiatives of President Andrés Pastrana and expresses the hope that they will be meet with a matching response from those groups. Peace in Colombia is a top priority throughout the Americas; it should also be a top priority for the international community. It is in the interest of all to help ensure that the Colombian conflict does not spread to the rest of the subregion.

Ecuador has committed itself to a broad and imaginative programme of development for our areas near the Colombian border; these are aimed at substantial improvements in the living conditions of the inhabitants, with a view to eliminating the severe poverty that gives rise to the violence of drug trafficking. That programme has recently received major backing from the international community through the advisory group set up last month at Brussels. I appeal to our brethren and neighbours in Colombia to join with us in similar programmes. I urgently appeal too to developed countries to continue to cooperate with such initiatives, which in the final analysis are the best way to guarantee peace and security.

The challenges facing mankind at the outset of the twenty-first century must be tackled by all countries, jointly and in solidarity. This is the beginning of a new era for major international decisions. The world Organization is the forum in which we can carry out a vast mission: equitably to solve global problems and to buttress collective security. Ecuador again commits itself to work ceaselessly to attain those noble goals.

Mr. Belkhadem (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): This session is taking place at a time when there is a new

international awareness of the global nature of problems of peace, security and development. The barbaric terrorist attacks against the United States on 11 September, and their alarming consequences, made it clear that terrorism is now a factor for worldwide political and economic destabilization.

Algeria has conveyed its deepest sympathy to the families of the victims of those horrible acts. It did so with all the more sincerity and feeling because for more than a decade Algeria itself has been enduring the horrors of terrorism. The international reaction to this devastating scourge has been a heartening collective wake-up call. Mobilization and multifaceted action to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations is now worldwide. In that regard, Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) unquestionably constituted a major breakthrough. It was adopted under Chapter VII of the Charter and obliges all States unequivocally and dutifully to outlaw terrorist activities and their supporters and sponsors, wherever they may be. Algeria is fully cooperating with the international community in the implementation of that universal collective endeavour. Algeria stresses how important it is that the resolution be strictly implemented and reaffirms the imperative need for universal adherence to existing international anti-terrorism instruments and for the ratification of relevant regional instruments. Algeria believes, inter alia, that the adoption of a comprehensive convention to combat terrorism is essential. For its part, my country is ready to cooperate with other nations to achieve this as quickly as possible.

The dangers that terrorism poses to global peace and security highlight the need for a ruthless struggle against it, in particular through dismantling bases and networks, draining sources of financing, cooperating in exchanging information and providing proper equipment to countries that are victims of terrorism, and reviewing permissive national legislation regarding the right of asylum as well as the justification for murder or planning criminal activities to be committed in third countries.

While the urgency of this struggle has made it possible to achieve notable progress in a few weeks, we must be unanimous in our determination if we are to confront the roots of terrorism — that is, we must address the problems that constitute a breeding ground for extremism and intolerance throughout the world. This means that Islam, a religion of peace and tolerance, cannot in any way be associated with terrorism, which is alien to its values. It also underscores the importance of ensuring that the anti-terrorist struggle is not aimed at any one country, religion, culture or civilization.

The United Nations, which has often diagnosed and analysed the state of our world, has rightly emphasized that problems tend to be of an economic, political and social nature and that their causes are both national and international. The denial of the right of peoples to self-determination, the exacerbated phenomena of exclusion and poverty, the persistence of economic imbalances, the intensification of social inequalities, the continued deterioration of the environment and the pursuit of the arms race are all problems awaiting solutions and concrete measures that, in many cases, United Nations forums have already defined and adopted in many cases adopted.

The commitments undertaken recently to make globalization a factor of integration rather than of exclusion — in particular the objectives enshrined in the Millennium Declaration — take on full importance here, since they highlight the urgent need for effective measures to build a stable and united world on a solid foundation. Today, reality amply demonstrates that globalization, despite its enormous potential and opportunities, has not yet yielded the expected results with regard to the universal improvement of living conditions. The processes to which it leads have too often widened the existing cracks within societies and exacerbated differences among nations. This has encouraged marginal groups to exploit the difficult social situations to which many peoples are subject and to promote isolationism and rejection of the other.

The Declaration and Plan of Action adopted by the Durban World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance provide a framework for inspiration and action to build more harmonious and fraternal relations among people.

First of all, there is a need at the United Nations level to set aright unacceptable situations of injustice and denial of rights. In Palestine, the serious situation that prevails as a result of the continued Israeli occupation and its oppressive practices requires the attention of the entire international community. It demands urgent action to put an end to the daily trials of the Palestinian people, who are subjected to a deliberate policy by the Israeli army of intimidation,

abuse and murder. This policy is likely to endanger the resumption of the peace process, taking the entire region to the brink of a conflagration with incalculable consequences.

Given the situation, Algeria reaffirms its total solidarity with the Palestinian people and their inalienable right to an independent State with Al-Quds al-Sharif as its capital. Algeria urgently calls upon the international community to ensure the protection of the Palestinian people by sending international observers to the region.

Algeria wishes to emphasize that only a solution based on international legality — in particular Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) — as well as on the principle of land for peace, adopted at the Madrid Conference, can ensure just and lasting peace and security for all the peoples of the region, as Chairman Yasser Arafat indicated in his speech this morning. Algeria would also like to reaffirm its solidarity with the brotherly peoples of Syria and Lebanon for the restoration of their lands still under Israeli occupation. In addition, Algeria welcomes the decision of the Security Council to lift the sanctions on the brotherly people of Sudan and seizes the opportunity to renew its appeal for the lifting of the sanctions on the brotherly Iraqi and Libyan peoples.

The situation in the Western Sahara, where the settlement process has been halted for more than a year and a half, is also a source of great concern and a factor of instability in the Maghreb and in Africa as a whole. The United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) has not been able to continue the implementation of the settlement plan of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU), though it had been accepted by the two parties to the conflict, the Kingdom of Morocco and the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguia el-Hamra y del Río de Oro (POLISARIO), in particular because of the many challenges that followed the identification stage.

Action by the United Nations in the Western Sahara, carried out through MINURSO since 1991, should be commended, and the progress made within the framework of the implementation of the settlement plan — in particular the identification of the electoral body — should be maintained and consolidated. Here, the two parties should be reminded of their obligation to cooperate openly and sincerely with MINURSO, to conclude the referendum process and to call upon the bodies of the United Nations that deal with this issue to strictly respect their mandate.

The unswerving position of Algeria on the issue of the Western Sahara stems from its dedication to international legality and to respect for the right of people to self-determination. Algeria therefore supports the holding of a free and transparent referendum, organized by the United Nations that will allow this people to decide on its destiny. Any effort or initiative to settle that dispute must be part of the framework of international legality and, in particular, of the resolutions on decolonization adopted by the General Assembly.

Elsewhere on the African continent, the determination of African peoples and leaders and the support of the international community are starting to bear fruit in the areas of conflict prevention and settlement. The Peace Agreement concluded in Algiers in June 2000 between Ethiopia and Eritrea put an end to a devastating two-year war between those two brotherly African countries and opened the way to a peaceful settlement of their dispute. The progress made since the full deployment of the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea attests to the commitment of those two countries to strengthening the basis for a lasting peace and for mutually beneficial cooperation.

Similarly, the implementation of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement, which has long been plagued by numerous difficulties, is now well under way. The international community must pursue its efforts to make the settlement process irreversible and to facilitate the inter-Congolese dialogue.

Africa also welcomes the progress made in Sierra Leone in the implementation of its disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes, which have been made possible by the courageous and determined action of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone.

Despite the positive developments that have occurred in Angola there, UNITA continues to sow death and destruction among the people of that country. A return to security will require strict respect by all States for the punitive measures laid down by the Security Council against UNITA.

Finally, regarding recent events in Burundi, my country welcomes the decision of the parties to the conflict there to establish a transitional Government that guarantees the participation of all the inhabitants of that country in the management of their own affairs. We hail the important role played by Mr. Nelson Mandela in achieving understanding among the parties in Burundi in the implementation of the Arusha Agreement.

The end of the cold war eased the climate of suspicion and distrust that permeated international relations and was replaced by a measure of optimism based on new prospects. We hope that this optimism will signal an end to outdated doctrines and theories of nuclear deterrence and the balance of terror and that it will open the way to a bold approach to guaranteeing the security of all States. Given this qualitative transformation in international relations, our hope of seeing our planet forever free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction is indeed strengthened.

The need to establish renewable international cooperation based on mutual interests and shared duties and responsibilities is more urgent than ever before. This new spirit must become an incentive for launching comprehensive initiatives to seek a genuine understanding of the problems plaguing the entire world. In brief, we must prepare for international governance that truly reflects the requirements of rationality, transparency, justice, democratic participation and responsibility, without which any discussion of a new world order is meaningless and of no use to humanity.

The progress that has been achieved at the political and economic levels in several regions and countries must be consolidated and enhanced through the international promotion of good governance. In this respect, the direct and indirect threats to sustainable development that jeopardize the survival of our planet require us all to mobilize on a vast scale in the context of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. Urgent measures must be taken to halt the devastating effects of various means and types of production and consumption that have become untenable. These must be transformed in a qualitative way, taking into account the needs of mankind as a whole.

In the same vein, the ministerial conference of the World Trade Organization that opened in Doha two days ago and the International Conference on Financing for Development, to be held in a few months in Mexico, are promising prospects for the lasting resumption of growth in the developing countries and for improving the living standards of their peoples.

Four months ago, African countries, meeting at the 37th Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity in Lusaka, clearly expressed Africa's official response to the new needs and aspirations of its peoples through their solemn launching of the transitional process towards the African Union and their adoption of the New African Initiative. These steps form an integral part of the reform process undertaken over the past few years by the African countries at the national, regional and continental levels to bring Africa into step with an ever-changing world.

Aware of the magnitude of the challenges facing the continent and of the need to acquire a global integrated programme for the social and economic recovery of the continent, African leaders at the Lusaka summit adopted a plan that was conceived by and for Africa. Algeria, which actively participated in the creation and drafting of the New Partnership for African Development, believes that this programme will open the way to practical solutions to the economic and social problems of Africa. Thus, in order for our Organization to bolster its credibility and effectiveness, to address the great changes on the international scene and to be more responsive to the aspirations of this global village, it must earnestly pursue its transformation and be more open to the world and to itself.

It is also necessary to ensure greater democracy and fairness within the United Nations system, in particular in the maintenance of international peace and security. The Security Council incontestably requires a drastic reform of its processes and membership. In a word, the United Nations must serve the great family of mankind as a whole.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Hor Namhong, Senior Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Cambodia.

Mr. Hor Namhong (Cambodia): I wish to join other representatives in congratulating you, Sir, on your unanimous election as President of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. We are confident that

under your able guidance the work of this General Assembly session will be another milestone on the new international scene, particularly in confronting the new challenges facing our world, especially after the extremely tragic terrorist attacks of 11 September on the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C.

I believe that the world has completely changed since the attacks against the United States of America, the deadliest terrorist attacks ever committed, in which so many innocent lives were lost. These acts of terrorism shook the world as the images of destruction were broadcast live. They were undoubtedly crimes against humanity. We must strongly condemn these terrorist acts. We cannot forget those who lost their lives and the families of the victims. In this regard, I wish to extend, on behalf of the people and the Royal Government of Cambodia, our most sincere condolences to the families of the innocent victims and the Government of the United States of America.

Cambodia fully supports the United Nations resolutions condemning the acts of terrorism against the United States. Cambodia also fully endorses the international efforts in combating terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. Cambodia is disturbed, however, over the loss of innocent civilian lives as a result of the bombings in Afghanistan. We must do everything possible to avoid civilian casualties and loss of life.

In order to find solutions to the current problems facing our world, I believe that we need to look into not only the root causes of terrorism but also the other contributing factors that are confronting the world today. First, we need to look for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East, in particular a solution to the Palestine problem. We need to respect the fundamental right of self-determination of the Palestinian people. In this regard, Cambodia supports the creation of a Palestinian State as early as possible. One may argue that the present situation in the world may have opened a window of opportunity for finding solutions to the ongoing conflict in the Middle East. I believe that all parties concerned should, and I hope that they will, give peace in the region a chance, which is the way to overcome the lingering conflict in the region.

Secondly, the increase in poverty in the world is another crucial problem that must be addressed with some sense of urgency and collective responsibility. Poverty is unquestionably one of the major causes of the problems in the world today. I think that all nations must join hands to fight poverty throughout the world. At the same time, we must work to reduce the widening gap between the developed and developing countries.

In this regard, it is important for us to recall last year's Millennium Declaration, whose main thrust was a war on poverty in the most comprehensive and most inclusive manner possible. For the developing countries, one of the main challenges in the war on poverty is managing the negative side of an irreversible process of globalization. The key question is how to best integrate ourselves into an ever-accelerating process of globalization so that the developing countries will not be left out or continue to be further marginalized. The process of globalization is a reality without precedent, and no country in this world is immune to, or able to opt out of, the process.

At the same time, we should work collectively towards minimizing the negative impact of globalization, which would enable the developing countries to pursue sustainable development and poverty reduction and provide the necessary tools for the people to improve their standards of living. Moreover, we think that if there is no mechanism or principle which is universally accepted in order to manage globalization, the gap between the developed and developing countries will further widen in the future. This is a problem of human security, which the international community must consider finding appropriate ways and means of addressing.

Thirdly, another side effect of poverty is the growing epidemic of HIV/AIDS worldwide, across regions and continents, affecting mostly the poor and the developing countries. Therefore, we believe that the rich, developed countries should do more to help in the fight against the global HIV/AIDS epidemic.

Fourthly, as a contributing factor for combating terrorism, we should attempt to find practical solutions to the growing threat of the proliferation of nuclear weapons and the illegal trade of small arms and light weapons around the globe. In this context, Cambodia fully agrees with the Secretary-General's statement at the Millennium Summit that the issues of nuclear weapons and illicit trade in small arms and light weapons should be given the highest priority on the United Nations agenda in the area of arms control and

disarmament. In this context, Cambodia wishes to call upon all countries to respect all the nuclear-weapons-related treaties, including the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty. Cambodia strongly believes that the international community should work towards a gradual reduction of nuclear stockpiles to a minimal level, and non-proliferation and non-production of such weapons in the future, which should be the basis for building and maintaining a peaceful, safe and nuclear-free world.

(*spoke in French*)

As a country that has suffered considerably from the proliferation of small arms, Cambodia welcomes the adoption of the Programme of Action at the conclusion of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. In this regard, I congratulate the United Nations on taking bold steps in addressing this vitally important issue. Since 1998, the Royal Government of Cambodia has carried out a nationwide campaign to address the problems regarding such arms. So far more that 120,000 small arms and light weapons have been confiscated, and more than 50 percent of them have been destroyed in the framework of an operation named "Flames for Peace."

Fifthly, for the United Nations to play a greater role in addressing the increasing number of complex problems that are now arising, the Kingdom of Cambodia is of the view that the General Assembly and the Security Council must be reformed so that they become more effective and more efficient. As we may recall, one of the most important pledges contained in last year's Millennium Declaration was the revitalization of the General Assembly. While progress in the structural and procedural aspects of the General Assembly are vitally important, we must not lose sight of the primary objective of this exercise, which is to return to the General Assembly its original function as the chief deliberative and representative body of the United Nations. In other words, the international community, especially the United Nations as a whole, must play a constructive and proactive role, without exclusivity, including in the struggle against terrorism.

Mr. Shaghem (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya), Vice President, took the Chair.

I also believe that the current global situation justifies a call for a constructive and timely reform of the Security Council, which must reflect the realities and needs of the world today. The Security Council must be reformed to be made more representative, more democratic and more effective in its decision-making processes. Its membership and structure, passed down since 1945, are inarguably outdated and no longer reflect the political, economic, social and demographic realities of our time or, apparently, the growing issues of human security.

As the United Nations Charter mandates the Security Council's responsibility in the maintenance of international peace and security, it is important for us to ensure that the interests of all nations are sufficiently reflected in the Council's composition and voting procedures. It is unacceptable, however, that the two thirds of the world's population residing in the developing countries are not equitably represented in the Council. Such practices could jeopardize the Council's credibility in the maintenance of international peace and security. In this regard, Cambodia supports the decision of the non-aligned countries in favour of an additional increase in the number of permanent and non-permanent members and in particular reiterates its strong support for Japan, Germany and India as candidates for permanent membership of the Security Council.

In conclusion, it is clear that we are living in a fast-changing world in which the rapid pace of globalization and growing interdependence are the order of the day. Peace, stability and prosperity are interrelated and affect all nations and peoples on this planet, especially following the extremely tragic terrorist attacks in September. It is therefore essential that we work together to build a genuine community of nations in which the gap between the developed and the developing countries is reduced; in which the threat of terrorism and nuclear annihilation are eliminated; in which the danger of a global HIV/AIDS epidemic is mitigated; and in which poverty is alleviated. This can come about only through the development of a more genuine cooperation, the fostering of enhanced mutual respect, the cultivation of greater tolerance, the promotion of better understanding and the emergence of a broader spirit of true union among nations in a world that works on behalf of all.

I strongly believe that we can achieve all this through collective will and actions that will help us to usher in a new and brighter future for our world — a world free of terrorism, a world of stability, peace,

security, development and prosperity for all peoples in the twenty-first century.

(*spoke in English*)

Finally, I am pleased to express, on behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia, our very warm congratulations to Mr. Kofi Annan on his re-election to a second term in the noble post of Secretary-General. I do believe that, with his dedication and long-standing experience in dealing with the many challenges faced by the United Nations, the Secretary-General will certainly achieve more success for the sake of peace and stability for all nations Members of the United Nations.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now call on Her Excellency Mrs. Lila Ratsifandriamanana, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Madagascar.

Mrs. Ratsifandriamanana (Madagascar) (*spoke in French*): It is with strong feelings that we return today to New York to find it still darkened by mourning yet ever brightened by the aura of freedom. New York is the capital of international diplomacy, a crossroads of cultures and civilizations, a cosmopolitan city in which nations co-exist. New York is a city whose heart will forever hold the memory of the victims of the human folly of 11 September 2001.

To the people and Government of the United States, under the enlightened leadership of President George Bush, we reiterate our deepest condolences. We also thank them warmly for their welcome and for the facilities placed at our disposal.

On behalf of the delegation of Madagascar, from this United Nations rostrum I convey to Mr. Han Seung-soo our sincerest congratulations on his election to the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session. To his predecessor, Mr. Harri Holkeri, we pay well-deserved tribute for the success of the Millennium Assembly.

To Mr. Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of our Organization, we express our pride at the important distinction he has recently been awarded. The Nobel Peace Prize that he has received is both a recognition of his unassailable competence and dedication as well as a reflection of the value of the United Nations and the trust placed in it by the entire world.

Our Organization is being confronted with new concerns every day. It is called on to keep up with the pace of international change in order to better fulfil its mission as a regulator of inter-State relations, a facilitator of negotiations and a catalyst of development. The United Nations remains the supreme decision-making body and the main guarantor of world peace and security.

Madagascar supports profound reform and a streamlining of the Organization's institutional structure in order to improve its performance. Madagascar remains convinced and confident, however, that our Organization is still a privileged platform for the exchange and harmonization of views.

Creating together a climate of world peace and harmony; struggling in unity against poverty, the AIDS pandemic, transnational crime and environmental degradation; building in concert a better future for the coming generation, our children, who are tomorrow's decision-makers — these were the expectations voiced at the Millennium Summit in this very Hall. It was an ambitious millennium, given the prospects and programmes of action projected up to the year 2015, and one of multiple challenges, given that objectives remain to be achieved and that we have a long road ahead of us. Above all, it was a millennium for taking stock and moving forward, since the situation of human and economic development calls on us to rise to its expectations and to overcome its hurdles.

A world of well-being is what our children need today and tomorrow above all. The devotion of my country and my people to all questions relating to children is seen in our genuine commitment to international conventions. On 16 July 2001, Madagascar ratified International Labour Organization Convention No. 182 on the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour. The Hague Convention on the Intercountry Adoption of Children is currently being considered by our Parliament. The implementation of the law of 1999 on paedophilia complements the Optional Protocol that we signed in September 2000 regarding the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

We welcome enthusiastically the decision to hold in May 2002 the Summit on the future of children. In view of our intention to participate in that event, a national parliament of children has just been established this year.

The family must remain the basic core of society, the foundation of the nation, a source of human dignity

and the guarantor of stable social development. Consequently, the family must be protected, as must be the values associated with it.

Madagascar, an island in the Indian Ocean, thus far little affected by the AIDS pandemic, is nonetheless not indifferent to this scourge. A strategy and a programme to prevent and combat AIDS, within an established institutional framework, are being pursued by all State and non-State institutions in the country. Having participated actively in the United Nations special session on AIDS in June 2001, Madagascar fully supports the resolutions adopted at that meeting. Since Africa has a wealth of medicinal plants, any research in this connection will benefit from consistent support.

Africa pledges resolutely, and with the full awareness of its responsibilities, to take its own destiny in hand. Positive development indicators are imminent, and are appreciated. Continental integration is underway within an effective African Union. Regional mechanisms for African conflict management and prevention are already operational. The New African Initiative, including long-term development programmes for our continent, has benefited from the support of the international community.

Nonetheless, in the context of globalization, the economic and commercial rules of the game are not always in the developing countries' favour. We deplore the widening gap between the economies of the countries of the South and those of the countries of the North. The World Trade Organization, which is meeting right now in Qatar, should further encourage the advanced countries to give greater trade preferences to the developing countries. Given the negative impact of a possible complete liberalization of trade, the economy of the least developed countries must be taken into consideration by the international community, because any new multilateral contract engenders binding obligations.

Integration within regional markets will clearly make it possible for our countries to adapt steadily to the demands and constraints of the world market, while promoting intra-regional and South-South exchanges. We expect of regional cooperation a concrete transfer of technology and know-how and a harmonization of standards.

Madagascar's economy has followed the dynamics of growth thanks to steadfast national efforts and an enterprising partnership. Madagascar joined the free trade zone of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), on 31 October 2001. We have benefited from the Initiative of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) and from the rescheduling or cancellation of our debts by a number of our creditors. We are signatories of the Cotonou Agreement of July 2001, and are beneficiaries of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). All of this bears witness to the confidence that the international community has in our country.

However, out of solidarity with all low-income countries, we believe that there is an urgent need to review international policy regarding official development assistance. We welcome the holding in Brussels last May of the United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries. The time has come for concrete action, so that the objective of reducing poverty by half by the 2015 can become a reality.

Madagascar has always been attentive to and concerned by situations of international conflict, and more particularly those that affect the African continent and the Indian Ocean area. In the framework of the Organization of African Unity and of the International Organization of la Francophonie, we have supported the Camoros in their process of national reconciliation and their return to constitutional normalcy. We welcome the draft constitution prepared by the Tripartite Commission, which included different trends and factions of the three reunited islands, and the decision to hold the referendum next December.

It goes without saying that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict claims our full attention. We believe it is imperative that a special session be convened on this question by the United Nations and also that an international force be deployed to protect the innocent victims. We support the Palestinian people in its struggle for independence and sovereignty. We also welcome the continuation of peace negotiations between the Government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization. The principle of land for peace must be respected. This must be done in keeping with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council.

Afghanistan, a den of extreme poverty and hotbed of tension, has recently become a site of war. While the fight against terrorism is legitimate and is the responsibility of all States Member of our

Organization, support for refugees and the civilian victims of war is a duty that shouts out at all of us. Humanitarian intervention is therefore imperative.

Madagascar reiterates its commitment to disarmament efforts, an essential element of the United Nations strategy for peace and security, according to the Secretary-General's most recent report (A/56/1). My delegation welcomes the holding in July 2001 of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Of course, we support the first global Programme of Action that was adopted. My country reaffirms the urgent need to implement the conventions of the United Nations that condemn the production, proliferation and illicit sale of weapons. Madagascar is a party to several multilateral treaties regarding disarmament. The Treaty of Pelindaba, which makes Africa a nuclear-weapons-free zone, has just been ratified by our Parliament.

Our reunion here in this Hall, in this large United Nations family, reminds us that we are survivors, and that it is only a matter of time before the terrorist sword of Damocles dangerously suspended over our heads, may again perpetrate its odious carnage. The fact that we have been spared compels us to mobilize and to coordinate a united and merciless struggle against terrorism.

Madagascar, my country and its people, coming from a mixture of many cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds, reiterates its condemnation of the terrorist barbarity that struck a sister nation, with victims of all nationalities having perished in the attacks of 11 September 2001.

Terrorism is the very negation of everything that we, as leaders of our different nations and institutions gathered here, do to make of this world a universe of law, humanity and lasting peace.

Madagascar has already begun the process of ratifying the 12 conventions against terrorism, and last October signed the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism. Likewise, we will immediately proceed to sign the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms. We support the draft comprehensive convention against terrorism, submitted by India, which is based on existing conventions, with the emphasis placed on concrete measures that member countries would be able to apply.

International cooperation in police and judicial investigations must be consolidated, taking into account exchanges of information on major trafficking activity. This would require harmonization of legislation and the establishment of multilateral operational structures for the prevention and suppression of transnational crimes.

The threat of bioterrorism has in recent times created a psychosis of collective fear that has spread throughout the world. This means that the international community must design and urgently put in place effective protective measures against this danger. The Convention on Biological and Toxin Weapons is now before the Parliament of Madagascar for ratification. It is now imperative that we think deeply and on an ongoing basis about the subject of terrorism. Combating terrorism also means identifying and understanding the causes of this scourge and eradicating the evil at its very roots. In order to halt its ramifications we must remove all sources of support, which involves destroying the many laboratories and bases for logistical backup and cutting off financing, weapons acquisition, fund-raising and proselytizing.

On the basis of that conviction, we are pleased that our Organization has adopted the Programme of Action for dialogue among civilizations.

In accordance with the United Nations resolution making 2001 the International Year of Dialogue among Civilizations, last October Madagascar organized a workshop in which all those involved in our country's development participated. From the discussions emerged the notion that traditional cultures could serve as a point of reference for modern nations to design a code of peaceful behaviour. The prevention of terrorist acts could also be complemented by educational and training programmes and information programmes on the culture of peace.

We have proposed the establishment at the national level of a non-aggression pact among the country's religious institutions in order to head off any dangers of religious war or other conflicts. This initiative deserves to be expanded to a wider scale in order to ensure a climate of confidence and calm. We must have the courage to denounce the excesses of fanaticism and religious extremism, which endanger our common values.

The time has now come for dialogue. It is not too late to become aware of the value of dialogue. Having

a dialogue does not mean tolerating misdeeds, nor does it mean any complicity with criminals, who must be punished. Above all, having a dialogue means going beyond terrorism through a new understanding of the concept of enemy. It is now time to hear each other, with mutual respect and in a climate of understanding that takes the other into account. It is now time for shared responsibilities and continued harmonization of views for the establishment of a world of trust.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Aboudramane Sangaré, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Côte d'Ivoire.

Mr. Sangaré (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*). The opening of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly has coincided with tragic events for the host country and for the entire world. On behalf of the Government and the people of Côte d'Ivoire, allow me to take this opportunity to once again express our sincere condolences and sympathy to the Government and the people of the United States and to all the other countries directly affected by this tragedy.

The delegation of Côte d'Ivoire is pleased to extend its warm congratulations to the President on his election to lead the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session. We would also like to extend our congratulations to his predecessor, Mr. Harri Holkeri, who so ably guided the work of the Assembly at its fifty-fifth session.

Our Organization and its Secretary-General have just been honoured with the prestigious Nobel Peace Prize. The Government and the people of Côte d'Ivoire hail this well-deserved international recognition of the importance and quality of the work done by the Organization under the leadership of the Secretary-General.

My delegation extends to Mr. Kofi Annan its warm and fraternal congratulations on his historic re-election and on the greatly appreciated work he is doing as the head of the United Nations. The recognition he has just received is an illustration of the universal appreciation of his great qualities as a diplomat and statesman, which he has put at the service of peace and development.

In organizing the Millennium Summit and in his personal involvement in the holding of the special session on HIV/AIDS, as well as his involvement in the special session on children, the Secretary-General has put back on the agenda the concerns of developing countries in general, including those of Côte d'Ivoire. It is absolutely vital to sensitize the international community on matters related to the fight against poverty and improving protection of the rights of women and children, to mention just two areas. Côte d'Ivoire would like to express its appreciation in this regard.

Finally, the Government and the people of Côte d'Ivoire would like to express their gratitude to Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his great understanding of, and support for, Côte d'Ivoire throughout the very difficult times it has experienced since the end of 1999. He demonstrated this once again by sending a personal representative to the forum on national reconciliation that is now under way. The Government and the people of Côte d'Ivoire and the international community have great hopes for that forum, whose success will help all participants to dispel misunderstandings and help Côte d'Ivoire to resume its economic growth in order to be able to play its proper role.

My Government attaches great importance to a social policy aimed at combating poverty and meeting the needs of all sectors of our population in the areas of health, education, employment and nutrition. As part of that policy, a strategy document on poverty reduction is being prepared.

Beginning in June 2002, a health insurance plan will be in place as part of a national social security system. Through that plan everyone living in Côte d'Ivoire will be able to have health insurance, regardless of social status. The National Assembly adopted the necessary laws to that end on 9 October.

No effort will spared to ensure that we eliminate the most serious social shortcomings as soon as possible. In that regard, our greatest ambition is for development and growth to reach the most remote regions and for the necessary basic services of running water, electricity, schools and health-care centres to be available to all the people in every village of Côte d'Ivoire. It is with this goal in mind that the Government has established a decentralization programme, thanks to which 58 departments of Côte d'Ivoire will be able to administer themselves and oversee their own development on the basis of a

budgetary packet granted to them annually through legislative appropriations.

In order to attain these various objectives, the macroeconomic framework will have to be improved through rigorous legal and budgetary measures and through good governance. Côte d'Ivoire is strongly determined to do its very best in this area.

Ensuring the well-being of children and the protection of their rights is a priority for my country. The special session on children will take place in a few months, and our Government places great hope in the fact that it will give us an opportunity to clarify the actions we are taking in favour of children, particularly in the fight against cross-border trafficking in children.

Last June, in this very Hall, States adopted new measures and initiatives in order to ensure the effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Côte d'Ivoire endorses all of these recommendations and will do everything possible within the framework of a renewal policy to reach as quickly as possible this objective, which is intended to ensure equal opportunity among men and women.

The problem of HIV/AIDS has become one of the major concerns of the world today in general and for Africa in particular. UN/AIDS statistics and those of many other institutions state that throughout the world over 30 million people are infected, of which 1.2 million are children. Africa represents only 10 per cent of the planet's population; nevertheless, since the beginning of this epidemic, 83 per cent of all deaths due to AIDS have fallen to Africa. As the Secretary-General has rightly stressed in his report of 16 February 2001, if the epidemic continues to grow at the present rate, the most affected nations will see a decrease of at least 25 per cent of their estimated economic growth over the next 20 years. For this reason we are very glad to see the setting up of a Global AIDS and Health Fund at the United Nations Secretary-General's initiative. It would also be a good time to set up mechanisms promoting the exchange of experience among those countries which have managed to halt the spread of HIV/AIDS and those which are still seeking solutions to it.

No country can flourish if international peace and security are threatened, which is why Côte d'Ivoire is extremely concerned by an arms race which dares not speak its name. As party to the Pelindaba Treaty, Côte d'Ivoire welcomes the increasing number of treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones in different regions of the world.

The illicit proliferation and circulation of small arms is another phenomenon that affects the African continent, and West Africa in particular. This phenomenon constitutes a permanent threat to peace and slows down development in this region, where over 15 million light weapons are circulating illegally. Since the end of the Second World War, the international community's attention has focused on nuclear arms. However, it is conventional small arms that continue to create millions of victims. Here we share the Secretary-General's opinion expressed in his Millennium Report: light weapons are indeed weapons of mass destruction. They exacerbate regional conflicts and contribute largely to the use of child soldiers. They kill women, youth and children. The insecurity that this creates prohibits any possibility of smooth economic development.

As Members of the General Assembly know, on 31 October 1998 in Abuja, Nigeria, the Heads of State of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) decreed a moratorium aimed at reducing the proliferation and circulation of light weapons in West Africa. During the recent African summit, which took place in Lusaka in July 2001, this moratorium was extended for a three-year period, starting on 5 July 2001. This struggle can be efficient only if it is led by the international community as a whole, and it has to involve, of course, weapons manufacturers, official users and civil society. The United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which was held in New York from 9 to 20 July 2001, is in our opinion headed in the right direction. Côte d'Ivoire is greatly interested in the implementation of the Programme of Action adopted by the Conference.

Eight years ago the General Assembly decided to undertake the reform of the Security Council. As it stands at the moment, the Council cannot be seen as a democratic and representative body of all United Nations Member States. The Council's functions have to be reinforced so that it can continue acting efficiently as the United Nations body with the primary role of ensuring the maintenance of international peace and security. In order to do this, it is urgent and right that the number of permanent and non-permanent members be increased so that the composition of the Council is in line with the complexity of a world that

has seen great development, both quantitative and qualitative, in international relations, the key aspect being the increased complexity of the problems to be solved.

In our view, the expansion of the Council should aim at re-adapting the whole mechanism of taking and implementing decisions. This is why the exercise of the right of veto, equitable representation and expansion of membership are all problems that have to be solved as soon as possible, bearing in mind the vital urgency of reforming the Security Council so that all nations and regions of the world can be reflected within it. In this regard, the Organization of African Unity (OAU), which has now become the African Union, seeks two permanent seats and a total of five non-permanent seats for the African continent. Of course, Côte d'Ivoire supports this position.

To make the reform of the Security Council a reality, it is essential for Member States of the United Nations, particularly the five permanent members of the Council, to demonstrate their firm will and commitment to carry out these reforms. The primary duty of the United Nations, after all, is to preserve and promote peace throughout the world based on democratic principles. But can there be peace without justice or equality in relations between nations?

The world as a whole and the African continent in particular, has been torn apart by regional conflicts and civil wars that threaten international peace and security. Various solutions proposed by the international community for laying down arms and for halting the suffering of civilian populations have not yet, unfortunately, produced the expected results. We need to find innovative and imaginative solutions that are political, not military. In this perspective, we welcome the Brahimi report on peacekeeping operations, and we hope that its recommendations are applied as soon as possible. The impetus that the Brahimi report is intended to give to peacekeeping operations has to be encouraged and maintained.

The events of 11 September 2001 confirm the Côte d'Ivoire in its condemnation of all terrorist acts as criminal and unjustifiable, wherever they may be carried out and whoever the perpetrators may be, particularly those that violate the purposes and principles of the United Nations, pose a threat to international peace and security and jeopardize friendly relations between countries. This is why the Government of Côte d'Ivoire welcomes and firmly encourages the rapid conclusion of a general convention on international terrorism. Such a convention would undoubtedly contribute greatly to fighting against this scourge and would reinforce an international legal regime on terrorism. Côte d'Ivoire will always respect the international commitments it has assumed since its independence. We also feel that the rule of law should be given top priority.

We would like to pay a well-deserved tribute here to the International Law Commission for its valuable contribution to the development and codification of international law, in particular law relating to the responsibility of States, diplomatic protection, unilateral acts of States, reservations to treaties and international responsibility in case of damaging consequences arising from activities that are not prohibited by international law.

At the dawn of the twenty-first century, the role of the United Nations is crucial. Our Organization represents, in fact, the collective conscience and is, as a rule, the policeman of the world, able to balance the interests of States — those well endowed and those not so well endowed — within the new globalizing economy. This regulatory role for the world economy and for international relations can be carried out fully only in an environment of international peace, justice and equity.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Fuad Mubarak Al-Hinai, Chairman of the delegation of Oman.

Mr. Al-Hinai (Oman) (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish to express my sincere congratulations to Mr. Han Seung-soo on his assumption of the presidency of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. We are confident that his skills, competence and experience in international affairs will facilitate his task of leading and enriching the work of this session and of bringing it to a successful conclusion with the desired results. We assure him of our delegation's cooperation in the attainment of our shared objectives. We also want to express our sincerest thanks and appreciation to his predecessor, Mr. Harri Holkeri, former Prime Minister of the friendly country of the Republic of Finland. We thank him for his efforts in directing the work of the last session and the various special sessions that took place during his term.

I want to take this opportunity to reiterate my sincerest congratulations to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, and to the United Nations itself on being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. This is a well-deserved award and a mark of distinction for the contributions and the remarkable role played by the Secretary-General and the United Nations in the maintenance and the strengthening of international peace and security.

On behalf of my delegation, I also want to express my sincere congratulations to the Secretary-General on being granted a second term of office at the head of the Organization. We intend to cooperate with him in the attainment of our objectives, in the fulfilment of the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and in the preparation and development of mechanisms for international cooperation in all fields.

The terrible events of 11 September that struck this city, which is host to our Organization, have been forcefully condemned by my Government. This city has attracted people from all over the world to a dialogue among civilizations through our international Organization, and it therefore deserves to be a city of peace, not of terror and violence. We therefore take this opportunity to express once again our sincerest condolences to the families of the victims and to the friendly American people, whose sorrow we share. The world was horrified by this dangerous turn of events — the terrorist acts that struck such vital sites in New York and Washington, taking many lives and leaving great destruction in their wake.

While expressing our solidarity with the friendly country of the United States of America in its struggle against terrorism and in the defence of its territory and its people, and while we understand the reasons for the military action being taken in Afghanistan, it is our fervent hope that every effort will be made to spare innocent civilians the destruction and disasters of war so that they will not suffer further tragedies. For its part, the international community must play its role in protecting the Afghan people.

We must not forget the peaceful means of dealing with terrorism. Every sincere effort must be made to eliminate the scourge of terrorism, which will destroy civilization and all the achievements of humankind if it is not firmly confronted and if its causes are not examined and uprooted. We stress that the use of military force is not the best or the only solution for eliminating terrorist groups. We appeal for a long-term vision to prevail so that all elements of the problem can be dealt with. In this respect, we reiterate our welcoming of the Egyptian proposal for an international conference on the fight against terrorism in order to arrive at an effective, binding international instrument for States.

In the midst of this tragedy, we have heard certain opportunistic political circles in States and at the international level linking terrorism to Islam and Muslims. We fully and categorically reject this. Islam is a religion of mercy for all, a religion based on fraternity and tolerance. Muslims are the bearers of a civilization, a culture and noble human and humanitarian values. This is why the Organization of the Islamic Conference, at its extraordinary session held in Doha, Qatar, last October, totally dissociated itself from all terrorism and reiterated its condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. The session's final communiqué reported in paragraph 3 that the Conference

> "stressed that such shameful terror acts are opposed to the tolerant, divine message of Islam which spurns aggression, calls for peace, coexistence, tolerance and respect among people, highly prizes the dignity of human life and prohibits killing of the innocent. It further rejected any attempts alleging the existence of any connection or relation between the Islamic faith and the terrorist acts as such attempts are not in the interest of the multilateral efforts to combat terrorism and further damage relations among peoples of the world. It stressed as well the need to undertake a joint effort to promote dialogue and create links or contacts between the Islamic world and the West in order to reach mutual understanding and build bridges of confidence between the two civilizations."

In this respect, my delegation wishes to emphasize its categorical rejection of the calls of all those who would like to use this human disaster to settle old scores and old political differences and to expand the field of military action to other areas under the pretext of fighting terrorism.

We are concerned about the humanitarian situation of the friendly Afghan people. International humanitarian organizations report that the military action taking place in Afghanistan has caused hundreds

of civilian casualties, that hundreds of thousands have been displaced and that the civilian population is experiencing severe living conditions. Humanitarian organizations have warned that a humanitarian disaster could be imminent for the Afghan people, especially with the approach of winter. My country supports international efforts to provide humanitarian aid to the Afghan people, especially through the recent resolution adopted at the meeting of Foreign Ministers of the Conference of the Islamic Conference with a view to creating a fund for this purpose.

The series of difficult and painful events in the peace process in the Middle East on all its tracks and at all its stages, particularly regarding the Palestinian aspect of the question, confirms that in order to arrive at a just, comprehensive and lasting peace it is necessary to work towards implementing Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), as well as all other relevant United Nations resolutions that demand the withdrawal of Israel from all Arab territories occupied in 1967 and recognition of the legitimate right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to the establishment of its own independent State, with Al-Quds al-Sharif as its capital. This is a basic, just and legitimate demand for the purpose of consolidating the pillars of peace and stability in the region. We express our full support for these just demands of the Palestinian people who are fully entitled to use all means available to them to put an end to the Israeli occupation of their territory.

The Islamic countries also support the right of the Palestinian people because of the justness of their cause. Theirs is a legitimate right recognized and guaranteed by all international norms and instruments. The Sultanate of Oman invites the United Nations and the Security Council to assume their full responsibility to have Israel implement all relevant Security Council and international resolutions and to stop the collective punishment of the Palestinian people.

Following the Madrid Peace Conference, in 1991, the region was full of hope and optimism. It seemed as though peace were becoming a reality. Many agreements had been reached, from Oslo to Sharm el-Sheikh, and all the parties had embarked on dialogue with one another in circumstances that were not ideal. Nonetheless, despite all the missteps, peace moved forward, because peace was the ultimate goal that everyone eagerly sought. The Arabs believed in peace. They had agreed to it as an irreversible strategic option based on the principles of Islam, which advocates tolerance and peace, and because they were convinced that peace alone would make prosperity, stability and development possible.

The Sultanate of Oman has therefore supported every effort, with a view to achieving that much-desired peace based on justice, fairness and the legality of international resolutions and the principle of land for peace. But Israel deviated from those principles, inventing its own concept of peace. Israel has used every possible means of imposing its own kind of peace. Israel does not really want the peace that the world is considering. Israel wants its own special kind of peace. It wants the international community to go along with the current reality — the occupation of territory, without giving the Palestinians any role or a State. This is why violence in the region is a dynamic of action and reaction. This is why there has been bloodshed and why life and property continue to be destroyed. Will the world stand by and watch the killing of innocents, the murder of the elderly and children?

The Sultanate of Oman therefore invites the two sponsors of the peace process — the United States of America and the Russian Federation — and the Secretary-General to play their role so that the situation can return to normal and so that the peace process, in all its aspects, can be revived and resumed from the point where it left off.

My Government supports the just position of the fraternal Syrian Arab Republic. Its actions are aimed at recovering the occupied territory of the Golan Heights and at ensuring Israel's withdrawal to the 4 June 1967 border. In our opinion, it is in Israel's interest to resume the negotiations, in accordance with the principles of international law and international resolutions including Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), as well as the principle of land for peace, in order to lay the foundation for peace and security, so that an effective partnership can be built and a lasting, stable and viable relationship based on mutual interests among the States of the region can be established and consolidated.

My Government also asks Israel to work towards the full implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978), which calls upon Israel to withdraw from all Lebanese territory. The Shab'a farms area is an integral part of Lebanese territory and is covered by

that resolution. It is in Israel's interest to withdraw from that territory in order to broaden the prospects of peace and to strengthen peace and stability, which everyone desires.

The imposition of sanctions as a political mechanism means that Governments must fulfil their obligations under international resolutions. However, we see that this policy has become a weapon that jeopardizes the fundamental rights of peoples. This is unacceptable. Hence, it is important that the Security Council seek effective policies and mechanisms that take into account the extent to which resolutions have been implemented by the countries to which those resolutions are addressed, such as Iraq, Libya and others.

Despite all the serious international and regional efforts to relieve the suffering of the fraternal Iraqi people, we note that the overall situation in Iraq and the future of the Iraqi people are becoming increasingly problematic because of the economic embargo imposed on them in 1990. That is also the view of the humanitarian and international agencies and organizations in Iraq.

The Sultanate of Oman supports all efforts to lift completely the economic sanctions against Iraq. At the same time, we call upon the Iraqi Government to cooperate constructively with the United Nations in order to implement the remaining relevant Security Council resolutions, particularly regarding prisoners of war, missing Kuwaitis and missing persons from third States.

The Sultanate of Oman warmly welcomes the wise approach of our brethren in Bahrain and Qatar. Those two countries have proceeded to implement the Judgment of the International Court of Justice of 16 March 2001. That positive approach by those two fraternal countries has eliminated many sources of tension and has made a genuine contribution to the establishment of peace, security and stability in the region.

My Government is gratified by the friendly official contacts between the United Arab Emirates and the Islamic Republic of Iran, which will enable those two countries to agree on joint means to put an end to their dispute over the three islands belonging to the Emirates.

The political, economic, social and cultural changes taking place in today's world mean that African countries and their leaders must work hard to build trust among their peoples and their countries so that they can cooperate on the basis of common interest and constructive dialogue and so that they can take local measures and initiatives to resolve all their disputes and to solve the refugee problem. We call on the international community, as represented by the United Nations, to take equitable measures to improve the situation in Africa and to make it possible to resolve its political, economic, social and health problems.

Because of the great importance that the Sultanate of Oman attaches to development, we are pleased that the first International Conference on Financing for Development will take place in Mexico in 2002 and that this date is in the near future. We appreciate the value of dialogue between the rich countries of the North and the countries of the South that are bedevilled by social and environmental problems, and we hope that contacts and dialogue between the two groups will increase genuine cooperation and coordination among States in all fields, with a view to narrowing the economic and technological gap between their peoples.

Over the past 30 years of Oman's development process, my Government has constantly worked to balance development and environmental protection. Such efforts have been successful thanks to His Majesty the Sultan's declaration of 2001 as the Year of the Environment. In the framework of our contribution and of our interest in global environmental issues, we have pledged that we will sign all conventions and treaties aimed at protecting the Earth's environment. My country today appeals to developed countries to meet the commitments they undertook at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held at Rio de Janeiro, especially with respect to the provision of technical assistance to developing countries.

In the light of the importance of integration into the world economy, my country officially joined the World Trade Organization on 9 November 2000. We hope thus to enhance the role and the level of our trade and industrial organizations and services and to ensure that they are duly integrated into world markets. My country has undertaken great economic reforms to liberalize trade and investment. We have also enacted

many laws and have strengthened our mechanisms and regulations in these areas.

I should mention that, on 20 December 2000 at New York, the Sultanate of Oman signed the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. We hope to complete the ratification process and thus to accede to this new organ of international law, which is aimed at bringing to justice those who violate human rights and commit crimes against humanity, wherever they may be.

We thank the Secretary-General for his annual report on the work of the Organization (A/56/1). It sets out the achievements of the United Nations while describing the obstacles in its way, and it charts a course for the future to strengthen our work towards the purposes for which the United Nations was established. In his report, the Secretary-General also discusses the implementation of the Millennium Declaration and its ambitious recommendations. We must be ready now to endorse visions that would strengthen the United Nations and restructure it in line with current realities. That includes enlargement of the Security Council in a manner proportionate to the overall membership of the international community. In that way the Organization can serve as an effective intermediary in international life and a source of international law.

It is our hope that this session will be successful, and that it will set out a vision of the future that will define the contours of future action for the benefit of all mankind.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): A number of representatives have asked to speak in exercise of the right of reply. Before calling on those representatives, I wish to recall that, in accordance with decision 34/401, statements in right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Eldon (United Kingdom): I should like to speak briefly in exercise of the right of reply to the remarks about the Chagos archipelago made today by the Prime Minister of Mauritius. The British Government maintains that the British Indian Ocean Territory is British and that it has been since 1814. It does not recognize the sovereignty claim of the Government of Mauritius.

However, the British Government has recognized Mauritius as the only State which has a right to assert a claim of sovereignty when the United Kingdom relinquishes its own sovereignty. Successive British Governments have given undertakings to the Government of Mauritius that the Territory will be ceded when it is no longer required for defence purposes, subject to the requirements of international law. The British Government remains open to discussions regarding arrangements governing the British Indian Ocean Territory or the future of the Territory. The British Government has stated that, when the time comes for the Territory to be ceded, it will engage in close liaison with the Government of Mauritius.

Finally, the British Government values its close and constructive cooperation with the Government of Mauritius on a wide range of issues, and looks forward to that cooperation continuing.

Mr. Aldouri (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation has asked to exercise its right of reply to clarify and correct some of the information in the statement made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Acting Prime Minister of the State of Kuwait. My delegation would like to say the following.

First, the Acting Prime Minister of the State of Kuwait stated that his country was under constant threats to its security and sovereignty. We would like to make it clear to the General Assembly that since the ceasefire, Iraq has made no threats against Kuwait. We would like to remind the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kuwait that Iraq is under constant attack by American and British planes, and these attacks have claimed many victims, including innocent civilians. This military aggression is launched from Kuwaiti land, waters and airspace. These daily attacks are documented by the United Nations. Therefore, Kuwait and the other aggressive States must shoulder their full international responsibilities. Iraq reserves its juridical right to ask for compensation as a result of its constant losses, in accordance with international liability law.

Secondly, as regards missing persons, everyone knows that Iraq has often stated that no Kuwaiti or non-Kuwaiti prisoners of war can be found within its borders. In fact, Iraq freed all Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti prisoners of war as soon as the ceasefire was established under Security Council resolution 687 (1991). This resolution also covered the freeing of Iraqi

prisoners of war, which was one of the ceasefire conditions. That is why Iraq had no interest in keeping any Kuwaiti or non-Kuwaiti prisoners of war.

Iraq asks Kuwait to no longer politicize the question of missing Kuwaiti prisoners of war. This matter should be settled through bilateral negotiations or under the aegis of the Arab League. Through the Assembly, I would also like to appeal again to our Kuwaiti brothers to establish direct bilateral negotiations in order to solve this humanitarian problem. I wish to remind Kuwait and the General Assembly that Iraq has provided over 1,042 files on missing Iraqi civilian and military personnel to the intermediary of the International Committee of the Red Cross. The Government of Kuwait, however, has provided us with no information on the missing Iraqis. For the same humanitarian reasons cited by the Acting Prime Minister of Kuwait, we would like to ask Kuwait to cooperate with us in providing necessary information on the fate of missing Iraqis.

Mr. Al-Otaibi (Kuwait) *(spoke in Arabic)*: I am very sorry to have to ask to exercise my right of reply at this late hour, but I can see that the incorrect information presented by Iraq requires clarification and rectification.

We have heard that Iraq has never threatened Kuwait since the ceasefire. This is obviously erroneous, as stated by Acting Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad. He stated that there had in fact been many declarations threatening and undermining the security and sovereignty of Kuwait, and this has been borne out by many of Iraq's recent activities. Iraq has refused to renew the commitment on the independence, security and sovereignty of Kuwait, which led to the Arab Summit's lack of success. Kuwait has sent many letters to the Security Council alerting it to various statements, including those by President Saddam Hussein, and these letters have been published as official documents of the United Nations.

It seems to me that what Iraq has said concerning American and British planes is a question of the no-flight zones. As for support for these flights, the zones were set up to ensure Iraq's commitment to abide by Security Council resolution 687 (1991). There is an agreement between Iraq and the coalition countries concerning ceasefire arrangements. According to its terms, these planes are to fly over Iraq and do not need to be based in Kuwait or anywhere else. A number of aircraft carriers off Kuwait are available to support such flights. Therefore, we reject such allegations and would like to ask Iraq to abide by all its commitments to relevant Security Council resolutions. Only in this way can we achieve the general objective of ensuring peace and stability in this vital region.

As to prisoners of war and missing persons, we are very sorry to hear what Iraq has said on this subject. It is by no means new; we have heard such erroneous information before. For over 10 years now, since the liberation of Kuwait, Iraq has not complied with the relevant resolutions on this subject, including resolutions 687 (1991) and 1284 (1999). A number of presidential press statements were made during the Tripartite Commission meeting asking Iraq to settle this question and to cooperate with Mr. Yuli Vorontsov, the high-level Coordinator of the Secretary-General on this matter. Unfortunately, Iraq has not yet responded to those statements. We hope that the Government of Iraq will change its position on this matter and not subject it to any political concessions.

The representative of Iraq has pointed out that Kuwait has to settle this matter through bilateral negotiations or through the League of Arab States. We have in fact rejected that Iraqi proposal because it establishes unnecessary mechanisms. There are already international mechanisms in existence, namely, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Tripartite Commission headed by the high-level Coordinator appointed by the Secretary-General in accordance with resolution 1284 (1999), Mr. Yuli Vorontsov. The basic objective of the Iraqi proposal is to take this humanitarian issue outside the Security Council framework and to further delay a resolution of this matter.

With regard to missing Iraqi persons, we wish to say the following. If the Iraqi Government were indeed serious about discovering the fate of those missing persons, why does it not participate in the process set up by the Red Cross and the Tripartite Commission in this regard? Kuwait had from the outset, for humanitarian reasons, cooperated fully with the Red Cross to solve this humanitarian issue, although it falls outside the purview of Security Council resolutions.

Kuwait had to submit to Iraqi occupation, and this is just a way of diverting attention from that fact.

The Acting President *(spoke in Arabic)*: I wish to remind representatives that second statements in the

exercise of the right of reply are limited to five minutes.

Mr. Aldouri (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): I repeat once again that Iraq has never threatened Kuwait. It is in the interest of Iraq to see stability and security prevail in the region. It is also in the interest of the Arab countries.

The question of the no-flight zones has already been dealt with and resolved through several United Nations resolutions and by the Secretary-General. Statements have been made to the effect that such zones are not based on any resolution of the Security Council, and are thus established in violation of Council resolutions and constitute an attack on Iraq. Therefore any facilities provided by Kuwait to the aggressors' planes are in violation of the Charter. Kuwait is responsible for that under international law, as are the aggressor countries.

My Government reiterates its sincere invitation to Kuwait to begin direct bilateral negotiations or negotiations under the auspices of the Arab League to take up the issue of missing Kuwaitis and Iraqis. Iraq is prepared to begin such negotiations immediately in order to resolve this matter on a humanitarian basis.

Mr. Al-Otaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): I am sorry for taking the floor once again. I shall be very brief.

I shall not repeat what has already been said with regard to the no-flight zones. But, with respect to Iraq's appeal to Kuwait to resolve bilaterally the question of prisoners of war and missing persons, our position is well known. In my first statement in exercise of the right of reply, I said that Kuwait refuses to create any new mechanisms to deal with this humanitarian problem. If Iraq were really serious and sincere, it would cooperate with the International Committee of the Red Cross and would participate in its meetings. Why does Iraq not cooperate with the high-level Coordinator appointed by the Secretary-General for that purpose? Why create new mechanisms? I have already said that the reason Iraq has tried to take this issue outside the framework of United Nations resolutions is because it wants to weaken the issue and delay the resolution of the matter. If Iraq really is sincere, why should we create a new international mechanism?

Finally, I would like to reaffirm what the Acting Prime Minister of Kuwait said in his statement. All that we ask of Iraq is for it to implement the relevant resolutions of the Security Council. This has been called for not only in the United Nations, but also at meetings of the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Non-Aligned Movement. The entire international community is demanding that Iraq implement international resolutions.

The meeting rose at 7.30 p.m.